

№ 493

FAME
AND

5 Cents.

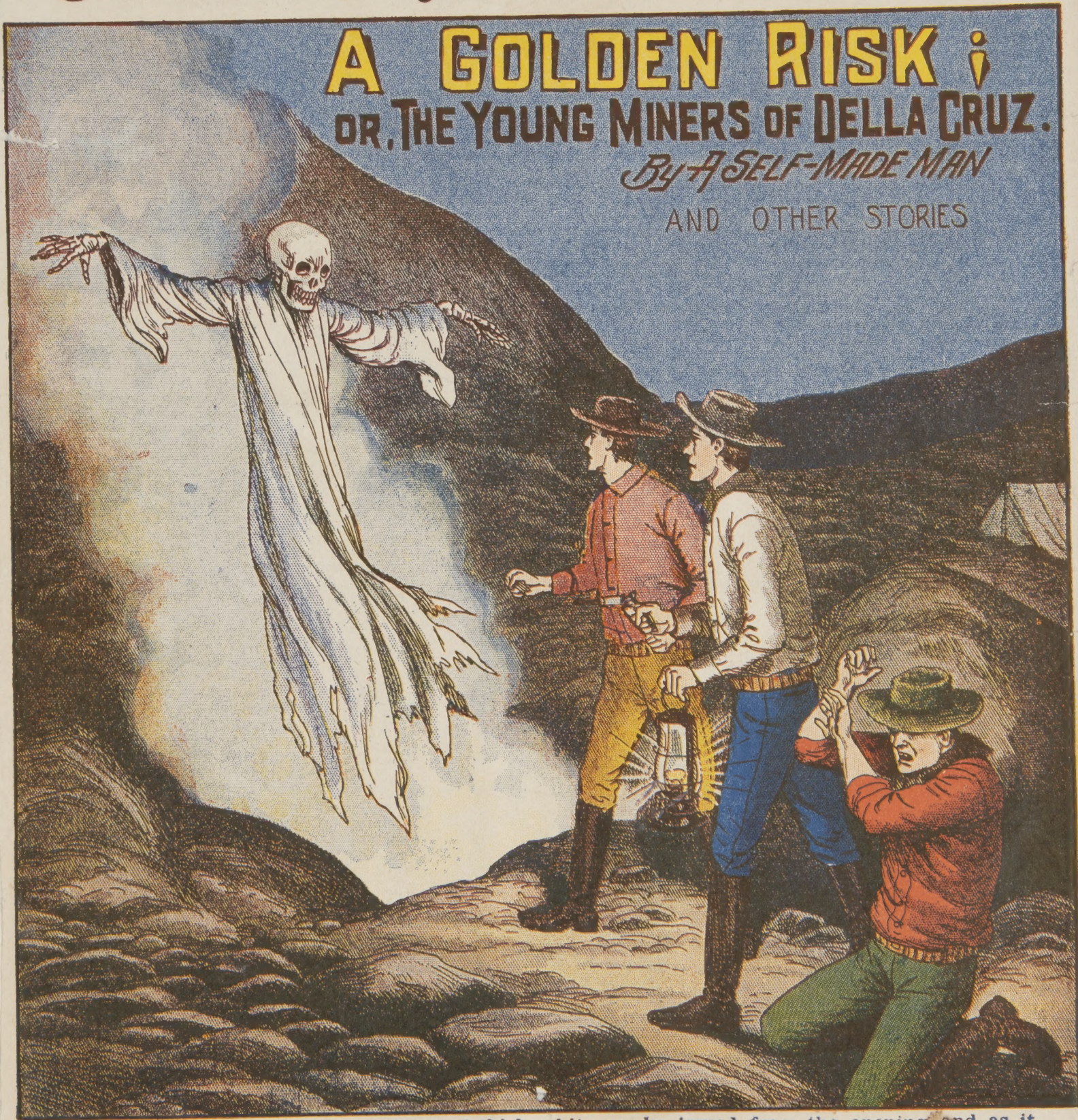
FORTUNE WEEKLY.

Stories of Boys who Make Money.

A GOLDEN RISK ; OR, THE YOUNG MINERS OF DELLA CRUZ.

By A SELF-MADE MAN

AND OTHER STORIES



Suddenly, without warning, a volume of thick white smoke issued from the opening, and as it melted away there was revealed, apparently floating in the air, a phosphorescent draped skeleton. "Howly mother!" gasped Corney, falling upon his knees in terror.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., as Second-Class Matter, by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d Street, New York.

No. 493.

NEW YORK, MARCH 12, 1915.

Price 5 Cents.

A GOLDEN RISK

— OR —

THE YOUNG MINERS OF DELLA CRUZ

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

THE AZTEC VASE.

"What an odd-looking vase, Cyril," said Will Adams, a good-looking, well-dressed boy of sixteen, as he held up to the light a curious relic of a past century.

It was made of bronze, profusely carved, and there seemed to be some sort of an engraved inscription on one side in a circular space left plain to receive it.

"Isn't it?" replied Cyril Young, with a smile.

Cyril was a handsome, square-shouldered lad of seventeen, and he and Will were chums.

They were standing in front of one of the windows of Cyril's room, on the third story of a handsome villa residence on Staten Island, overlooking the Narrows and upper New York Bay.

It was the early part of the month of June; the air was balmy, and the sun was kissing myriads of little wavelets which the morning breeze had set in motion.

Cyril's parents were well-to-do people.

A few days before Mr. Young had sailed for Europe on a combined business and pleasure trip and had taken Mrs. Young and their daughter Edith with him, leaving Cyril in charge of Professor Euclid, his private tutor, who was fitting both boys for college.

Will Adams had taken up his temporary abode with his friend Cyril, as his father was away on a business tour of the far Northwest and his mother was dead.

The boys were never so happy as when in each other's company.

Their tastes and general views of life were similar.

In a word, they were a sort of pocket edition of Damon and Pythias.

"Where did you get it, Cyril?" asked Will, turning the antique vase over and over in his hands, but with great care.

"I picked it up in a Third avenue curiosity shop," replied his friend. "It cost me three dollars."

"Looks to me as if you had got a bargain."

"I am not sure of that, though it is true the dealer wanted five for it at first, but finally agreed to let me have it for three, as that was all the funds I had to spare."

"It's worth three dollars as a curiosity. How old do you think it is?"

"You've got me. It might be centuries old, and then, again, it might be quite modern. I'm going to put its age up to Professor Euclid. He's something of an archaeologist, you know."

"It's hardly possible, I think, that any valuable specimen of ancient workmanship, such as this appears to be, would be

floating around second-hand shops in New York City," said Will, reflectively.

"That's right. I'll bet we'll find it's a bogus specimen, got up by some clever European artist in the metal line to swindle a collector."

"And the collector, when he found out he had been duped, fired it out from among his treasures, and that's how it came to be in circulation," suggested Will.

"I should imagine that is about the size of it," agreed Cyril. "It's worth three dollars to me on account of its beauty and artistic design."

"It would look better if it had a good rubbing up."

"I'm going to clean it after I've shown it to the professor."

"That's a curious inscription. It certainly isn't Latin, nor does it resemble Greek."

"Looks to me like a species of hieroglyphics."

"The ancient Egyptians used hieroglyphics to express themselves."

"And so did other old-time nations."

"Also the American Indians, for instance."

"I've seen lots of illustrations of hieroglyphics, but never anything just like this," said Cyril. "Let's look the matter up in the encyclopædia."

Cyril possessed a fine set of the Britannica edition, and the two boys hastened to get the proper volume and lay it out for their inspection on a convenient table.

While they were thus engaged, with the vase prominently displayed before them, there came a knock upon the door.

Neither of the boys heard the knock, so interested were they in the subject before them.

Presently the door was opened, and a little, wizened old man, in a somewhat faded but scrupulously clean brown suit, appeared in the opening.

He had a shiny bald head and wore a pair of unusually large horn-rimmed spectacles upon his beak-like nose, which gave him something of the appearance of a Chinese mandarin.

This was Professor Euclid, the private tutor.

He walked softly into the room, closing the door behind him, and as he drew near to the boys the vase attracted his sharp eyes.

As he reached out his hand to take it up, while a look of surprised interest came into his sedate features, the boys suddenly became aware of his presence.

"Good-morning, professor," said both boys in a breath; but the learned gentleman, for once in his life at least, forgot to respond to the salutation.

"Where did you get this, Master Cyril?" he asked, at length, bending a questioning look upon his eldest pupil.

Cyril told him how it came into his possession.

"Has it any real value, Professor Euclid?" the lad concluded, eagerly.

The professor made no reply, but turned the article over slowly and critically in his fingers.

"I got it so cheap that I'm afraid it's an imitation of some original, or perhaps the creation of a relic manufacturer."

"What do you think it is?" asked the professor, with a keen glance.

"I haven't any idea. To me it looks like an old Roman or Greek vase."

"Nothing of the kind," replied the professor, sharply.

"It's a fake, then," said Cyril, in a disappointed tone, for, though he had had doubts about his genuineness, yet he had secretly hoped that he might be mistaken.

"No, Master Cyril," replied Professor Euclid, slowly, "this is no fake."

"No fake, sir?"

"No. It is a genuine Aztec vase, of the time of Montezuma the Second, who was elected king of Mexico in 1502. This vase is, therefore, four centuries old."

"You don't say!" almost gasped Cyril in surprise, while Will Adams seemed to be equally astonished.

"There is an inscription on it, I see," went on the professor, peering fixedly at the queer characters cut in the metal. "I am very much interested in this, my lad. You will let me take it home with me to-day, as I should like to try and decipher these rude characters?" And the old man looked eagerly into his pupil's face, while he clutched the vase as if loath to give it up.

"Certainly, Professor Euclid. Is that in the Aztec language?"

"Not exactly, Master Cyril. It is a specimen of Aztec hieroglyphics, a method these people adopted to record their annals, as well as any information they wished to keep a secret from outside nations."

"Then you have given some study to the Aztecs, have you, professor?" asked Cyril.

"I have given many, many years of my life to a patient research of the early Mexican race. It is a passion—a hobby with me," cried the learned man, his eyes lighting up with the fire of an enthusiast. "The history of ancient Mexico exhibits two distinct and widely differing periods, the former of which, that of the Toltecs, appears to have been begun in the seventh and ended with the twelfth century; while the second, that of the Aztecs, began in the year 1200, and may be said to have been closed by the conquest by Cortez in 1519, for its existence as a nation ceased with the Spanish domination."

"It must be an interesting subject, professor," said Will.

"Ah!" ejaculated the private tutor, and there was a world of meaning in that little word. "It has been to me a life work to penetrate and understand the secrets of those wonderful peoples—the Aztecs particularly. They were highly superstitious and worshiped quite a number of deities, despite the progress they had made in the arts, as shown by representations of their paintings and their architectural and sculptural monuments."

"I read something about the Aztecs not long ago in a popular magazine," said Cyril. "I remember the article stated that those people had one supreme god and something like two hundred inferior ones. I can't recall the name of the chief divinity—it was a jaw-breaker. Had I been able to pronounce it, I think it would have loosened every tooth in my head," he grinned.

"The name of the patron god of the Aztecs was Huitzilopochtli," said Professor Euclid, glibly.

"You say it easily enough, professor," replied Cyril, "but it looked a great deal worse than that in print. The article went on to say that this Huitzilopochtli—whatever-you-call-it had splendid temples in every city of the empire, and that his altars were drenched with the blood of human sacrifice. The smell of these places was like slaughter-houses."

"That is quite true, Master Cyril," answered the professor, gravely. "To supply victims for these sacrifices the emperors made wars on all the neighboring states and levied a certain number of men, women and children by way of indemnity. These victims were borne in triumphal processions, and to the sound of music, to the summit of the great temples, where the priests, in the sight of assembled crowds, bound them to the sacrificial stone and, opening their breast, tore from it the bleeding heart, which was either laid before the image of their gods or eaten by the worshipers, after having been carefully cut up and mixed with maize."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Will. "I'm glad I didn't live in old

Mexico. Just think of having your heart torn out of you while you were still alive."

"I've heard that Montezuma had amassed fabulous wealth in the capital city of Mexico at the time Cortez conquered the country, and that he hid a lot of it to keep the Spaniards from getting hold of it," said Cyril, eagerly.

"That is so. Montezuma's riches were beyond the dreams of avarice."

"They must have been pretty big, then," chipped in Will. "Some of our own billionaires have a pretty tidy lot of wealth. If it was all combined in one man, for instance, I guess he'd be many times richer than Croesus."

"Croesus was probably the richest man of his time, but his time was nearly five hundred years before the Christian era. Mr. Rockefeller, of to-day, could he convert his vast possessions into coin, could throw the ancient rich men far in the shade."

"But, professor," said Cyril, returning to an interesting subject, for him, "it is a fact, isn't it, that Montezuma did hide a big share of his wealth, which has never been discovered?"

"Such is the fact, Master Cyril," replied Professor Euclid, tenderly caressing the bronze vase. "More than that: the famous mines of Montezuma, from which he procured his marvelous store of gold and silver, were never discovered by the Spanish conquerors, though Cortez used every effort to wring the secret from the captive monarch. Their location is still a mystery—a mystery which I myself have tried in vain to unravel."

"You, professor!" exclaimed Cyril, in astonishment.

"If you are ready, young gentlemen," said Professor Euclid, abruptly, "we will go on with our morning studies."

CHAPTER II.

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.

Professor Euclid devoted four hours daily—Saturday and Sunday, of course, excepted—to the instruction of Cyril Young and Will Adams—from ten to twelve and from one to three, taking his lunch with the boys in the spacious dining-room of the Young mansion.

Promptly at three o'clock the professor took his departure for his home, which was about a mile distant, with the precious vase wrapped up under his arm.

"You made a great find in that vase, after all, Cyril," said Will, as they stood on the veranda and watched the attenuated limbs of their instructor carrying him at a rapid rate up the road, for the house was situated well on the outskirts of the town.

"It was pure luck. The dealer must have got it pretty cheap himself from somebody who had no idea of its value, and, not being a connoisseur of such things, he affixed his own value to it. He seemed to be glad to get rid of it, from which I judge it must have been some time on his hands."

"It wouldn't surprise me to learn that the vase was stolen from a collection of such articles by a thief who had no idea of its worth."

"That is not impossible," replied Cyril. "If Professor Euclid really is an expert in Aztec matters, as he says he is, the vase undoubtedly is a genuine find. I should like to know what that inscription says."

"Probably the vase was made for and presented to some big bug of those days, and the hieroglyphics explain the fellow's name and the reasons for the presentation, just as folks do nowadays when they present a loving-cup to some popular district leader or lodge master."

"Not unlikely. Such things have been done in all ages."

"By the way, Cyril you seemed mighty anxious to know something about those lost mines of the Montezumas," said Will, branching off onto a new topic. "The professor, however, didn't seem very anxious to gratify your curiosity."

"That's right. He changed the subject pretty abruptly, thought. He's a curious old chap, isn't he?"

"Almost as curious as the vase itself, eh?" laughed his friend. "He might have answered your question, anyway. I was rather eager to learn something on that subject myself, too. I once read a story about a lost Peruvian mine, which the Inca had sealed up after the victories of Pizarro had made that adventurous Spaniard master of the country, and the tale fascinated me more than anything I ever read before."

"There is certainly something attractive about the rediscovery of a lost mine."

"That's what there is. I wouldn't mind discovering a few myself," grinned Will.

"A few? Wouldn't one satisfy you?"

"Hardly. I yearn to take the wind out of Vanderbilt's sails."

"You're quite modest in your desires, Will."

"I can't help that. I was born that way."

"Do you mean to say you'd like to be the richest man in the world?"

"No. I was only joking. A million is good enough for me. I wouldn't know what to do with any more."

"I'm afraid we both will have to do a lot of hustling before we get to be worth a million."

"The professor seems to have interested himself in those lost Aztec mines, from the way he spoke. One wouldn't think, to look at him, that he cared for a lot of wealth. Anyway, he's too old to enjoy a big windfall. Now, with you and I it would be different. We have lots of time ahead of us to spend it in."

"Sure we have—if we should live," replied Cyril.

"Well, according to life insurance statistics, we have a pretty fair chance."

"I'm going to strike the professor again on the subject of the Montezuma mines. I'm satisfied that he knows a deal about them. You heard him say that the study of the Aztecs and other early Mexican people was a hobby with him."

"Sure I heard him and did you notice the way his face brightened up when he said it? I'll bet he'll be able to read that inscription, all right."

"I felt it in my bones that he will. That vase seemed to have tickled him to death. He kept it near him all day. And while we were studying our Greek lesson I noticed him poring over the hieroglyphics in a most absorbed way."

"It's a great thing to know as much as Professor Euclid," said Will. "But for all that, he hasn't got wealthy by his knowledge."

"Well, Will, let's take a spin up the road as far as Blankville on our bicycles. What say?"

"I'm willing."

"There's Corney now. I'll send him for our wheels."

Corney McFaul was the gardener's assistant.

He was a good-natural Irish lad, a late arrival from the green isle of Erin, and the boys liked him very much indeed.

"Hello, Corney!" called Cyril.

"Yis, sor," answered the boy, coming forward and touching his hat respectfully.

"You know where we keep our bicycles, don't you?"

"Thim little things wid two whales apiece, is it you mane?"

"Yes."

"Shure I do, sor."

"I wish you'd bring them 'round here. We're going out for a spin."

"For a spin, is it? Faith, it's mesilf will be afther bringin' 'em to yez at wanst, sor."

Corney dropped the handle of the lawn-mower and started for the shed where the boys kept their wheels.

"I never saw a more obliging young fellow than Corney," said Will, watching the Irish lad till he disappeared around the corner of the house.

"He certainly is a treasure in that way," agreed Cyril.

"Where did your father pick him up?"

"At Ellis Island, the day he disembarked from the Celtic."

"He came over on the Celtic, did he? That was an appropriate name," grinned Will.

"He was as green as his native isle when he came over last fall, but he's getting bravely over it by degrees. I was speaking to him the other day about the troubles of his country—I had just been reading a long article in the Post about the future of the Emerald Isle. Finally I asked him what the Irish were coming to."

"And what did he say?" asked Will, curiously.

"To Ameriky, sor," he answered, as sober as a judge.

"Ha, ha, ha! That was pretty good," laughed Will.

"That's what I thought."

At this point Corney reappeared, wheeling the two bicycles along in regulation fashion.

"I'll have to get a wheel for you, Corney," said Cyril, "and teach you how to ride it. It's splendid exercise."

"Yis, sor; thank ye, sor, but shure it do be plenty of exercise I find in kaping things nate about the place. For what wid lookin' after the garden, and helpin' the cook in the kitchen, and—"

"I know all about that, Corney," laughed Cyril. "That's work, but riding a wheel is great fun."

"Is that a fact?"

"That's what we find it, eh, Will?"

"Sure thing," replied Adams, mounting his bicycle.

"Now, if you'll open the front gate, Corney," said Cyril, bestriding his own wheel.

"Faith, I will," hastening to do so, whereupon the two boys glided out into the road.

It was about three miles to Blankville, and Cyril and Will were not long in covering that distance.

As they started on their return trip they noticed that a thunder storm was coming up from the direction of New Jersey.

"We'll have to get a move on, or we'll be caught by the storm before we can reach home," said Cyril.

"Oh, we can stop at the professor's if it comes to that," said Will.

"So we can, but I'd rather go straight on to the house."

They started down the road at a lively gait, but the storm came up faster than they thought it would.

The wind swooped on the island with a rush, tearing through the trees and churning up eddies of dust in the road in a way most unpleasant for the boys.

The declining sun was engulfed by the electrically charged clouds, and the air grew dark and threatening.

Then the first big drops of the oncoming rain were blown into their faces while they were yet a mile from their destination.

"We'll have to stop at Professor Euclid's, after all," said Will, as a brilliant flash of lightning lit up the sky, presently followed by a heavy roll of thunder.

"Well, his house is only a short distance away, up yonder lane. We've got to make record time, or we'll be soaked before we get there."

They made their pedals hum and flew along through the fast-increasing rain like a pair of winged Mercuries.

The outer gate of the professor's place was reached just in the nick of time.

Will jumped from his wheel and opened the gate for Cyril to pass through, and then followed his chum up to the back porch as fast as he could follow.

Hardly were they under shelter when the rain came down in a perfect flood.

"We just escaped it, chapple," said Will, as Cyril rang the bell, the sound of which was drowned in a terrific peal of thunder, seemingly close at hand.

Mrs. Benson, the professor's housekeeper, came to the door and admitted the boys.

"Dear me! are you wet? Come right into the kitchen and dry yourselves by the fire," she said, with warm hospitality. "Then you can go up to the professor. You'll find him in his room."

Cyril and Will stood their wheels against the wall of the entry and availed themselves of the housekeeper's kind invitation.

The boys were exceedingly glad they had found shelter as they stood before the bright kitchen fire and listened to the battle of the elements outside.

The rain beat heavily against the windows, the lightning grew more vivid and the thunder louder and more frequent.

"Rather early in the season for such a heavy storm, don't you think?" remarked Will.

"Yes. It's a corker, all right."

The dampness soon dried out of the boys' garments, and they decided to seek the professor in his den—a large, square room on the second floor, overlooking the road.

The room was an interesting place for Cyril and Will, who had been there many times, as it was filled with all sorts of unique objects, from the war clubs and javelins of the South Sea Islanders to antique curiosities of every conceivable kind, for the professor was an industrious collector of everything out of common under the sun that his purse would permit him to secure.

The floor was covered with rugs, and a big bookcase, filled to overflowing, took up the whole of one side of the apartment.

Cyril knocked twice on the door without receiving an answer; but this was not surprising, as the professor was a trifle deaf, and the storm, now central above the island, made a great racket.

Under these circumstances Cyril took the liberty of turning the knob and opening the door.

As he did so a tremendous shock swayed the house from roof to basement.

The boys were dashed against the corner of the bookcase as if seized and flung there by a giant hand.

Every object in the room, including the lean form of Professor Euclid, who was bending over his writing-table, in the center of the room, under the glow of a swinging bronze lamp, was for the moment lit up with a dazzling, supernatural

sort of glare, the professor himself seeming to be the very center of the electrical display, while the roar of the explosion filled the boys' ears with a stunning violence that cannot be described.

The house had been struck by a thunderbolt.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROFESSOR.

It was several moments after the light had faded from the room, leaving everything apparently as it was before, that the boy recovered their faculties and their feet.

They heard the clatter of Mrs. Benson's shoes on the stairs, and presently the startled face of the housekeeper appeared at the door.

"Goodness gracious!" she exclaimed, in a quavering voice. "Has the house been struck by lightning?"

"I guess it was," replied Cyril. "Will and I were knocked all of a heap up against the bookcase. Never felt such a shock in my life, did you, Will?"

"I should say not," answered his chum, who was partly dazed yet from the shaking up he had been subjected to.

Another brilliant flash lit up the room and the landscape outside and another terrific peal of thunder shook the atmosphere.

Mrs. Benson screamed and covered her head with her apron. Both boys turned pale and shivered for a moment, for their nerves had been badly upset.

The most remarkable feature of it all was that Professor Euclid never stirred or seemed the least bit disturbed by it all.

He continued to lean over the table in the same attitude the boys had noticed when they started to enter the room.

It was the attitude of one engaged in writing.

The bronze Aztec vase was propped up before him, as if it engaged his attention.

Several of the curiosities scattered about the room had been displaced by the shock the house had undergone, among other things an expensive glass jar from the ruins of Pompeii, presented to the professor by an old college friend, and which he prized highly, which lay in a thousand pieces at the base of the mantel.

The rain beat down heavier than ever upon the roof and against the windows.

It seemed to be coming down in sheets.

"Gee whiz! how it is pouring!" exclaimed Will, when the blue glare of the lightning had died out of the room again.

"I should say it is," replied Cyril. "But I say, old man, has the professor gone stone deaf all at once? He hasn't moved since we entered the room."

Mrs. Benson uncovered her head as the boy spoke and looked toward her master.

The lamp above the table, which had been swinging to and fro, now came to a rest, and its soft light shone clear and bright upon the motionless figure beneath.

As the three gazed in great wonderment upon the learned little man, who might have been taken for a graven image, for all the sign of life he exhibited, something glistening dropped from the ceiling and settled upon the old man's bald head.

It was a big drop of water.

A second drop followed and settled beside the other, and then came a third and fourth in quick succession.

If anything should have disturbed the professor, that ought to have done it.

He never made a sign that he felt it.

At that moment Mrs. Benson uttered an exclamation and pointed at the ceiling above her master's head.

The boys' eyes followed the direction indicated by her finger and saw a small, dark hole that seemed to have been punctured through the white plaster by a hot iron.

Moisture was gathering about it and discharging itself in drops upon the professor's head.

"My gracious!" cried Cyril. "What does that mean?"

The housekeeper, struck by a sudden presentiment of evil, rushed up to Professor Euclid and looked into his set face, at the same time laying her hand upon his arm.

Then she uttered a scream that brought the boys to her side.

"Merciful heaven!" she exclaimed. "He is dead!"

"Dead!" gasped the two lads in one breath.

Yes. Professor Euclid was, indeed, dead.

Killed in the fraction of a second by the bolt of lightning, which had entered by the roof, passed through his body and

thence through the rug to the boards of the floor, whence in some unaccountable way it had been deflected to the side of the room, leaving a blazed trail behind it.

As they straightened the professor up they observed a blistered patch of skin upon the front of his skull, where the flesh beneath looked discolored.

His eyes were wide open, and he looked so lifelike that the boys could hardly believe he was really dead.

Cyril found it difficult to remove the penholder from his stiffened fingers.

"This is terrible," he said, with some emotion, for he liked his old instructor.

Will Adams said nothing, but he showed that he was greatly upset.

"We'd better lay him out on the sofa," Cyril said to the weeping housekeeper.

"Do as you think best," she sobbed. "Poor old gentleman! He was a kind and indulgent master."

"Come, Will, lend a hand," said Cyril.

As they straightened the old man's limbs upon the lounge Will pointed to his left trousers leg.

The lightning had ripped it from the waistband straight down to the top of the gaiter, which was also rent into a shapeless piece of leather.

"He never knew what struck him, Cyril," said Will, with a mournful shake of his head.

"Then he couldn't have suffered anything."

Cyril removed the coverlet from the professor's bed, which stood in the alcove, and covered the body from view.

"We feel very sorry for you, Mrs. Benson," he said to the distressed housekeeper. "If we can be of any assistance in this unforeseen emergency we will gladly do what we can."

"Thank you, young gentlemen. It is very good of you, and I shan't forget it," replied Mrs. Benson. "As soon as the storm is over you had better notify the coroner. And you ought to telegraph Professor Euclid's nephew, Robert Morrison, who lives in Harlem, right away. I will get you his address."

Mrs. Benson rose, dried her eyes and left the chamber of death.

The boys went to one of the windows and looked out.

The rain was still falling in a lively fashion, but the storm itself had passed off oceanward.

"It is clearing up fast," remarked Will.

"It was short, but mighty fierce while it lasted. Poor old professor! Who would have expected he would have gone off like this?" said Cyril, sadly.

"It seems to be the unexpected that always happens."

"What shall we do now for an instructor?"

Will shook his head gloomily.

"I give it up," he answered. "You will have to cable your father for instructions, as he left you in charge of Professor Euclid."

"We may have to give up our vacation trip to Mexico, where the professor was going to take us."

"Oh, I guess we're old enough to go by ourselves."

"Well, it depends on what my governor says. He has confidence in my ability to look out for myself, so I don't think he will veto any reasonable plans we may form for the summer."

"I should hope not. As to my father, he's perfectly satisfied when I'm in your company; therefore there won't be any kick coming from him."

The boys came to a pause beside the table at which the old professor had been engaged when struck down.

"He was writing something," said Cyril, looking at a thick notebook, in which Professor Euclid, in his crabbed hand, had closely scrawled a great many lines, the last word ending abruptly.

There were several open notebooks near, the exposed pages of which were inscribed with strange characters, and there was a big printed volume lying close to where the old man's elbow had been, which was opened at a page covered with similar, but enlarged, characters.

He was translating that inscription on your vase," said Will, pointing at the Aztec relict lying against a small, closed book.

"I believe he was," said Cyril, snatching up the notebook and scanning the professor's penmanship, which was not easy to read.

"What does it say?" asked Will, eagerly.

"You'll have to give me time to decipher his pothooks—they are something weird in their way."

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT PROFESSOR EUCLID WROTE BEFORE HE DIED.

Cyril sat down in the chair lately occupied by the dead professor and began to study the writing.

As he slowly made out the meaning of the words he grew intensely excited.

Will, leaning over him, and also taking in the sense of the manuscript, shared in the feeling which agitated his chum.

By slow degrees they mastered all that Professor Euclid had written down up to the moment he had been so suddenly taken from the world.

It ran as follows:

"June 13, 190—

"At last the dream of my life is about to be realized. I have this day come into possession of an Aztec vase of priceless value—priceless because it conveys the secret I have long searched for in vain, a secret hidden from the world for four centuries. On this vase is an inscription in Aztec hieroglyphics intelligible only to him who by profound study and long research is able to translate the meaning thereof. This inscription is the key to the location of the lost mines of Montezuma II., sealed up by the king's orders, that they might escape spoliation at the hands of the victorious Spanish adventurer, Hernando Cortez, and his followers. It was engraved on this vase by an artist of the first order in the empire, who was immediately put to death when he had finished his work, that the secret might remain alone with the king himself. Cortez knew that these mines, incomparably rich in gold and silver ore, existed, and by some means it came to his knowledge that the secret of their location had been engraved upon a bronze vase of peculiar workmanship; but threats, and even torture, failed to make the captive Montezuma disclose where it had been hidden, and the most diligent search of the country failed to reveal the whereabouts of the mines. After four hundred years this vase has turned up in the city of New York, and was yesterday purchased for a song by a young pupil of mine, Cyril Young, from whom I have borrowed it. The translation of this inscription has not been an easy matter even for me, who is regarded as an expert in the language and hieroglyphics of the Aztec peoples. I will jot it down here in its most lucid shape, that I may profit by the wonderful intelligence it conveys.

"The lost mines lie in the heart of the Della Cruz mountains, that mark the boundary between the States of Hidalgo and Della Cruz. The exact spot is one hundred and fifty miles southeast of the city of Mexico, and is marked by a low, flat mountain peak (the site of the great altar of the chief god Huitzilopochtli) which stands between two twin peaks of conspicuous altitude. At the time the mines were sealed up the monstrous figure of the god was taken down and placed within the mines for safety. When the morning sun has risen to a point in the heavens that the two ends of a line drawn exactly through its center will rest upon each of the twin peaks the extreme point of the shadow cast down the valley by the peaks should be marked at the same time. At a certain spot an imaginary line, intersecting these two points—the spot cannot be mistaken, for from there you can see—"

Here Professor Euclid's description terminated, for at that point his life went out like the snuffing of a candle.

"Too bad," remarked Cyril, as he looked up into his friend's face. "The most important part of the description, probably, will remain a lost quantity."

"What do you think of it, Cyril?" asked Will, in a voice of excited interest.

"I think we have reached the borderland of a wonderful discovery."

"That's what I think, too. The professor was a most astonishing man. Without his minute knowledge of the country of the Aztecs and the history of that peculiar race, I am satisfied that a literal translation of the meaning of the hieroglyphics on that vase, if made by an ordinary expert, would have been valueless at this day, after the lapse of four hundred years."

"You are right, Will. Its meaning could only be made clear by the mental retrospect in connection with an absolute familiarity with conditions as they existed at the time the mine was sealed by Montezuma. I am satisfied the professor had all the landmarks down fine, and that he alone of all men in this world could have laid his finger upon the lost entrance to those mines."

"Had he but lived a few minutes longer—"

"Will, there is something weird about this thing."

"What do you mean?" asked his chum, a bit startled by his friend's manner.

"I mean that it almost looks as if heaven does not intend that the lost mines of Montezuma should be brought to light."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because of the strange and instantaneous manner of the professor's death."

"I can't see the point."

"Notice how the description breaks off. 'The spot cannot be mistaken, for from there you can see—' He was on the point of noting down a vital clew. Some natural landmark, perhaps, which marks the entrance to the mines. Half a dozen more words would probably have betrayed the secret, and yet those half a dozen words were fated never to be written."

"Pshaw!" replied Will. "It's simply a mere coincidence that the professor was struck down at that particular point in his description. It would have answered better, if heaven intended the mines to remain forever a mystery, that the vase should not have reached the professor's eye at all. The fact that it did come to the attention of the one man, of all others, able to read and apply his knowledge to a practical translation of the hieroglyphic inscription shows there is no special reason why the secret of the mines should not come out some time."

"There is sense in your argument, I admit, but—"

"Come off, Cyril; you're getting superstitious, aren't you?"

"It isn't that, old fellow. Heaven may have had reason for permitting the professor to get so far in his description as a warning—"

"To whom? Not to Professor Euclid himself, for he is past such a thing."

"To you and I, who were bound to find the writing."

"Don't get dopy, Cyril. Put that book into your pocket, roll up the vase, for it belongs to you, and let's get to town to notify the coroner. Hurry up, for I hear Mrs. Benson coming upstairs. She went to get the address of the professor's nephew, to whom we are to telegraph the melancholy news."

Cyril thought his chum's advice good and followed it.

He had just finished wrapping up the Aztec relic when the housekeeper re-entered the room.

"Here is Mr. Morrison's address, Master Cyril. I mislaid it and it took me some time to find it. I hope you will excuse the delay."

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Benson."

"We ought to send some one to keep you company, Mrs. Benson, don't you think?" suggested Will.

"Well," she replied, thankfully, "if you don't mind calling in at Major Bradford's, the first house you come to on the road below, and tell him what has happened, I shall consider it a favor."

"Certainly, Mrs. Benson," replied Cyril. "We will do that with pleasure."

The boys went downstairs, got their wheels and started off.

They stopped at Major Bradford's house, communicated the sad news of the professor's death, and then went on again.

At the Young mansion they stopped long enough for Cyril to take the precious Aztec vase to his room, and then they continued on to the town, where they hunted up the coroner and informed him of the peculiar manner in which Professor Euclid had met his death.

This duty over, Cyril went to the hotel, where there was an office of the Western Union Telegraph Company, and forwarded a message to Robert Morrison, who lived in West 142d street, Harlem.

It was dark now, so the boys hustled to get back to their supper, which they knew the cook would have waiting for them.

On their arrival they circulated the news of the unexpected death of the professor among the help, which consisted of a cook, chambermaid, gardener and his assistant, Corney Mc-Faul.

Professor Euclid had been a familiar visitor at the Young home for many months, and was well-known, too, and much respected, by the servants.

CHAPTER V.

CYRIL'S PLANS.

After they had eaten their dinner the boys went right up to Cyril's room and sat down to have a talk.

"Let's go over the professor's notebook again," said Will,

with an eagerness unusual with him. "I might as well admit I'm decidedly interested in those Montezuma mines."

Accordingly Cyril produced the book and they read over again all that Professor Euclid had set down in relation to that fascinating subject.

"The professor placed their situation as in the heart of the Della Cruz mountains, which divides the States of Hidalgo and Della Cruz," remarked Will. "Get out your atlas, Cyril, and let's see if we can form some idea of the place on the map of Mexico."

A standard atlas was brought forward and opened up on the table.

Cyril turned to a good-sized map of Mexico.

"Here we are," he said.

"Get out your dividers."

Cyril hunted up his box of drawing implements and took out a pair of brass compasses.

"Now mark off one hundred and fifty miles on the scale," said Will.

Cyril did so, setting the dividers at that width.

"Here is the city of Mexico," went on Will, indicating the spot on the map with the point of his little finger. "Stick one of the points right on it."

Cyril put one of the sharp legs of the dividers in the little round ring which indicated a capital city.

"Here is the compass point indicating north," continued Will. "Let me see, this should be about southeast."

Cyril swung the other point of the dividers around till it rested on a line with the direction shown by Will.

"Where does it bring us to?" asked Will.

"Into the midst of the Della Cruz mountains."

"Gee whiz!" cried Will, excitedly. "That confirms the first of the professor's directions, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does," replied Cyril, interested beyond measure by the fact.

"One hundred and fifty miles southeast of the city of Mexico, in the heart of the Della Cruz mountains. That's the way he wrote it and that's the way we find it. On that spot is supposed to stand a low, flat mountain peak between two twin peaks of conspicuous altitude, something like this," and Will took a sheet of blank paper and drew a representation of the three mountain peaks as he judged they ought to look. "The twin peaks must bear a remarkable resemblance to each other, for, according to the professor, a line drawn exactly through the center of the rising sun at a certain hour will rest on the top of each peak, like this."

"Will, with a small ruler, drew the line, and then added a little circle in the center of the line and between the peaks to represent the sun.

"The shadows cast by the peaks will come, say, here," and Will made a couple of dots. "Now, I will draw a line intersecting them, thus," and he did so. "Now, at a certain point along this line something is to be seen that furnishes a clew to the place where the lost mines lie. Have I made the matter clear?"

"As clear as crystal," replied Cyril, who had followed his chum's exposition of the theory of the thing with much interest.

"The interesting question is, at what point along an imaginary line of indefinite width is the spot from which this mysterious something is to be seen?" said Will, looking at his chum.

"Well, I'll tell you how that might be arrived at," said Cyril, reflectively.

"How?" asked Will, with some eagerness.

"If we were on the spot, and had ascertained the exact position of the imaginary line in question, by starting out, each of us from the opposite points of the shadow, as previously marked according to the directions, and walking slowly toward a common center, we might, by keeping our eyes carefully upon the center of the low, flat-topped mountain, reach that particular point where one of us would see—"

"What?" grinned Will.

"I can't say what, of course; but it must be something out of the ordinary in the landscape which is invisible to the eye except when the observer is in one particular position."

"But, Cyril, while, by following out your directions, we might actually see the landmark in question, it might not of itself be peculiar enough to attract our attention; while if we knew what the landmark was we should then be in a position to identify it the moment our eyes lighted on it."

"Exactly, Will; but we don't know what the landmark, as we presume the unknown clew to be, is, and no amount of guesswork on our part will supply the deficiency. The professor's life was cut off at a most inopportune moment. Had

he lived to write even three or four more words, the key of the situation would probably now be in our hands."

"That's right," nodded Will, with a lugubrious expression on his face. "Still, what good would that do us, unless we went to Mexico and made use of our knowledge on the spot?"

"We intended to go to Mexico this summer, didn't we?"

"Under the professor's guidance—yes."

"Well, what's the matter with our going, anyway, on our own responsibility?"

"Do you mean that, Cyril Young?"

"I do."

Will sat back in his chair and looked at his chum a moment or two without speaking.

"And is it your idea to make your way into the heart of the Della Cruz mountains at a point one hundred and fifty miles southeast of the city of Mexico?" he asked, at length.

"It is," replied Cyril, coolly.

"Without a more tangible clew than we possess in the professor's notebook?"

"Yes."

"And, of course, you expect me to go along with you?"

"Yes. You and—Corney."

"You mean to take Corney?" in surprise.

"Why not? Do you object to him?"

"Not in the least. I rather like the idea of having him along. But will he go?"

"He'll go with me all right, never fear."

"But hold on there. Ain't you rather premature in making your plans? How do you know that your father—"

"I'm going to write to the governor to-morrow morning full particulars of the professor's death. It would be of little use to cable the bare fact, as I would have to send a letter anyway. I'll tell my father what our plans for the summer are, and ask his permission to carry them out."

"And you think he will agree to let the three of us—you, I and Corney—make this proposed trip to Mexico?"

"I think he will," replied Cyril, confidently.

"If he will, it will be simply great," cried Will, with sparkling eyes. "We'll have the time of our lives, whether we find anything out about the Montezuma mines or not."

"Well, I'm going especially to investigate the professor's description. Somehow I've great faith in the idea that something is going to come of it. I shall be sure of it the moment my eyes actually rest on those twin peaks with the low, flat mountain midway between them. I'm curious to learn just what the missing clew is, and if there is such a thing as finding it out, I'm going to do it."

Cyril spoke in a determined way that showed he meant every word he spoke.

He had plenty of American pluck and energy—qualities he inherited from his father, who had started out in life a poor boy, without friends or influence, and made a place and financial standing for himself before he reached the age of forty.

Cyril was as good as his word about writing to his father next morning.

While awaiting a reply, which he did not expect before the first week in July, the two boys employed the time making preparations for the proposed trip which they confidently expected to make.

They got books descriptive of Mexico, its topography, climate, inhabitants, mode of living there, and a host of other details which they felt they ought to know.

All this in addition to the copious information the dead professor had already imparted to them at odd intervals.

They proposed to make the journey to the city of Mexico in the ordinary guise of tourists, but after that they expected to rough it, for they had no idea how long they would remain in the Della Cruz mountains prosecuting their search after the lost mines of the Montezumas.

Corney McFaul was delighted with the idea of accompanying Cyril and Will to Mexico, or anywhere, in fact.

As a matter of fact, he would have been just as ready to go with them to the North Pole, if that had been the object of their journey.

At last the expected letter arrived, and it contained the much-desired permission for Cyril to go to Mexico with his comrades, as originally determined on when it was expected that Professor Euclid would head the party.

Mr. Young enclosed a couple of pages of practical advice.

In his opinion it did well-balanced boys a world of good to be thrown upon their own resources and compelled to look out for themselves.

It imparted to them a degree of confidence not otherwise obtainable and gave them the opportunity to accumulate valuable experience.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CITY OF MEXICO.

It was a bright morning early in July that the three boys left New York City for Mexico, via St. Louis and Kansas City.

At the latter city they changed to the C., R. I. & P. R. R., and finally reached El Paso, which extended along a fertile and narrow valley upon the Rio Grande, in the Mexican State of Chihuahua.

Here they connected with the Mexican Central Railroad.

The first important stop in Mexican territory was at Chihuahua, the capital city of the State, where they stopped over a day to see the sights.

The next stop they made was at Durango, capital of the State of Durango, and a railroad junction.

They also laid over at Zacatecas and San Luis Potosi.

After that they did not get off the cars till they reached the city of Mexico, which is built upon a plain surrounded by mountains.

When Cortez emerged from the mountain gorge and looked down on the empire city of Tenochtitlan (Mexico) he beheld a magnificent lake extending for miles, while from islands, seeming to float upon the sparkling bosom of the water, rose temples, palaces, obelisks, streets, mansions, and all the belongings of a vast capital, while broad highways, like Roman roads, connected this second Venice with the adjacent shores.

That city, with its splendid temples and palaces, with its countless throngs of citizens, and all the pageantry which to the sober Spaniard made the reality look like a dream, was in a few months annihilated by the furious soldiery of Cortez, urged to the work of destruction by the bigotry of the priests.

Even the splendid lake of Tezeuco has become changed; and, though the new city of Mexico has been built on the site of the Aztecs' capital, the water has shrunk three miles from its walls.

"Well, here we are at last in the oldest city of America," said Cyril, when they stepped down upon the railroad platform.

"That's what," replied Will Adams, enthusiastically.

"Here, Corney, just get our things together, will you, and load them on to that cab," and Cyril motioned to the driver of one of the native vehicles who was making signs at him.

"Do yez call that a cab?" ejaculated Corney, looking at the conveyance with an eye of wonder.

"Well," laughed Cyril, "it's the nearest approach to one I see here."

"Faith, it's got whales, at any rate, and a horse to draw it, though the poor baste looks as if he hadn't had a square meal in a month, so he does."

Cyril arranged with the driver to take them to a prominent hotel, and thither they were presently conveyed at a rather unsatisfactory pace.

They had ample time to notice that the city was laid out in parallel lines, with intersecting streets at right angles.

"There are some magnificent buildings here, all right," remarked Will, as they jogged along through the wide thoroughfares.

He pointed to one of vast dimensions and faultless in architectural beauty.

"That's a beaut," coincided Cyril. "It looks like a convent, or something of that sort."

"There's another yonder, and you can't mistake that for anything but a church."

"The Catholic churches here are said to be wonders in their way."

"Why wouldn't they be, when they spend so much money on their decoration?"

"There are mission churches in the small towns which present an elaborate front outside, but the rest of the edifice is built of any old thing, with an adobe roof over all. Nothing like a good bluff sometimes, is there?"

"That's right," replied Will. "Hello! What's this we're coming to?"

The vehicle had come out into and was crossing the great square of the Mexican capital, toward which the principal streets all converged.

"Why, any one can see that it's a square."

"Begorra, it's a mighty big wan, so it is," chipped in Corney.

"This must be the Plaza Mayor. The guide-book says it is one of the finest squares of the Western world," said Will.

"You're right, Willie boy," replied Cyril, "for there's the cathedral which was erected on the ruins of the Aztec god by somebody, I can't remember the name. Our cabby is going to take us close to it."

"Cabby is good," grinned Will. "This conveyance is several times worse than a New York 'night hawk.'"

"So long as it doesn't break down before we reach the hotel, I haven't any kick coming."

"Why didn't you pick out a hotel nearer to the depot? This chap will have a bill against you a yard long?"

"I selected one of the hotels recommended by the guide-book. I didn't think about its location."

"Shure, it's a foine long ride we're after havin', at any rate," grinned Corney. "Is it by the mile or the hour they charge, I don't know?"

"I guess this chap will charge by the hour, the way he jogs along," chuckled Will. "As the price of everything here is about half what it is in the States on the gold basis, I guess we can stand it."

"How do yez make that out, will yez tell me?" asked Corney, somewhat perplexed.

"Why, this country is run on the silver standard, and silver is worth only a little more than half as much as gold; consequently, a dollar of American money goes twice as far down here as it does on the other side of the Rio Grande, see?"

"You mustn't forget one thing, Will," chipped in Cyril; "the prices are higher in Mexico than in the good old U. S. That almost equalizes the difference."

In about fifteen minutes they were deposited at the hotel. Cyril had asked to be taken to.

After their first meal in the Mexican capital the boys went out to take a walk.

Having once taken their bearings, there was not much chance for them to get lost, as long as they kept to the more important thoroughfares, for the hotel was not far from the Plaza Mayor.

They wandered around for a matter of three hours, taking in the sights.

The only public building they visited was an academy of fine arts, which contained a valuable collection of Aztec antiquities that greatly interested Cyril and Will.

Next morning they followed one of the fine raised paved roads, planted with a double row of trees, which led out into the country.

They ascended one of the hillsides and got a sort of bird's-eye view of the city and its surroundings.

From this point of vantage they could see for some distance beyond the city walls.

They looked down on the placid lake spreading for miles; cultivated fields, nodding groves and vineyards met their eyes at every turn, while the towering Cordilleras, crowned with eternal snow, and on their acclivities presenting every variety of color, completed a panorama that can hardly be surpassed in the world for beauty and magnificence.

Mexico still boasts a few of the water-gardens for which the ancient city was so celebrated, and, although no longer floating, as in the days of the Aztecs, they form attractive objects in the midst of the surrounding swamps, which, by the negligence of the Mexicans, have been permitted to increase in the vicinity of the lakes.

The boys remained a week in the capital, gathering information about the region of the Della Cruz mountain range, particularly that part they expected to explore.

Then one morning they took a train which carried them eastward through the mountains and then southward along the foothills and through a great valley to a small and unimportant town, whither they had already forwarded their baggage and supplies for their mountain trip.

CHAPTER VII.

PEPITA.

"Be the piper that played before Moses, what do yez call that?" exclaimed Corney McFaul, on the third day after the boys had left the city of Mexico.

They were traveling along a dusty country road leading toward the southeast in a general way.

They had discarded the apparel of civilization, and were clothed in loose woolen shirts of a dark blue material, substantial trousers to match, stuck into the top of long boots, miner-fashion, while each wore a soft, broad-brimmed hat of the style affected by the American cowboy.

A belt, to which was attached a holster, in which reposed an up-to-date six-shooter, was buckled about their waists.

Each bestrode a strong, active-looking Mexican horse, while Corney led by a long rope a big, bright-eyed mule, loaded with the poles and canvas of a tent, as well as many bundles of supplies.

The sun shone from an unclouded sky, and, while the day

was not unusually warm for Mexico, the boys, strangers to the climate, thought it was pretty hot.

They had been jogging along since sunrise, and were looking for a convenient stream, which they had been informed ran through the neighborhood, to make a stop for rest and dinner, when they heard the clatter of horses' hoofs and the rattle of wheels behind them.

Presently they turned their heads to see what was overhauling them.

Presently around the turn in the road swung an old, decrepit diligence—a sort of four-wheeled public stage-coach.

It swayed to and fro on its springs like a small lugger in a cross sea.

This crazy-looking conveyance was filled with male and female Mexicans of the lower order, who were chattering together like a lot of magpies.

The driver was lashing his team of stout mules into a run, while on the seat beside him and on the roof were half a dozen picturesquely clad natives of the country, smoking the everlasting cigarette with the utmost composure, in spite of the jerky motion of their vehicle.

"That's a Mexican diligence," replied Cyril, in answer to Corney's exclamation.

"A diligence, is it? Faith, it seems to be all comin' apart, and it's full of payple, too."

"Don't worry, Corney; it isn't going to come to pieces. It's good for many moons yet," laughed Cyril.

With a rush and clatter the vehicle flew by them, the passengers inside craning their necks to get a view of the boys, as much a curiosity to them as they were to the lads.

"It's pipin' us off they are, do yez notice?" grinned Corney, doffing his big hat to a pretty senorita, who smiled back at him and showed a set of ivory teeth.

"Do yez moind that, now? Shure, it's a bit of a Don Juan I am wld the ladies."

"You'd better look out, Corney. It's a dangerous matter to flirt with the Mexican girls. They've nearly all got sweet-hearts, and it doesn't take much more than a wink to make those chaps jealous."

"And what then, sor?"

"What then? They'd just as soon give you a dig under the fifth rib with those little sharp knives they carry as eat. Then where would you be?"

"And what 'ud I be doin' all that time?" grinned the Irish boy.

"You wouldn't have a chance to do anything. They wouldn't come up before your face. They'd steal up behind your back, when you were off your guard, and soak you in the solar plexus."

"Is that the way they do?"

"That's the custom of the country."

"Then it's a mighty shabby custom, so it is. I think I'll be afther slapin' wid wan eye open afther this."

"You'll need to, if you're going to make a practise of mash-ing the girls."

"There's the stream we're looking for, Cyril," said Will, at this point, waving his arm toward a glittering streak of water issuing from among the foothills and crossing the road about a quarter of a mile ahead.

When they came to it they turned off toward a grove of trees, beneath which they tethered their animals with long ropes, after relieving the mule of its load.

They built a small fire to make some coffee, which they sweetened with condensed milk, while the rest of their al fresco meal was made of American canned goods, with some maize bread they had procured at a small adobe farmhouse, as they called it, where they had picked up a breakfast that morning.

They talked and dozed under the trees for the best part of the afternoon, until the heat of the day had somewhat subsided, when they resumed their journey.

Thus several days passed, and they drew nearer and nearer to the Della Cruz mountains, whose outlines they could make out above the distant horizon.

Cottages were frequently met with half-hidden amidst banana trees and coffee bushes, tall mango trees and flowers of every hue.

The cottages were chiefly built of cane, with sides not over four feet, and roofs rising ten to twenty feet—some even taller.

Brown women were busy at their household tasks, and brown children lay, like beetles, lazily in the shade of the sun.

Sunday afternoon found them resting in a shady spot within forty miles of the mountain range, which filled the horizon north and south as far as the eye could reach.

Will and Corney had gone to sleep, but somehow or other Cyril didn't feel at all drowsy.

He tried to pass away the time studying a small handbook of the Spanish language, in which the three boys had made some progress since they started from their home on Staten Island, but the effort was a failure.

So he put the book into his pocket and started to wander off about the neighborhood.

He came at length to a well-beaten path.

Following this, he passed through a cactus hedge, which had hitherto obscured his view, and found himself in a large grove of pepper and mesquite trees, whose feathery leaves cast delicate shadows on the white ground.

A stream ran along the path, and he crossed it further on by means of stepping-stones, made out of horses' skulls.

"Gracious!" he exclaimed, in some surprise, "this is a new kind of bridge for crossing water. I wonder what great head originated such a scheme?"

The cacti that girdled the grove were of gigantic growth, and of the grotesque and even gruesome shapes, and in the dusk of the evening one might even fancy them the grim guardians of some ogre's castle beyond.

Never having seen anything like them before, Cyril paused to examine them with the interest of a curiosity-hunter.

While thus engaged he thought he heard voices not far away.

This fact did not disturb him, though in all probability he was startled by hearing a woman's scream.

Then came the light patter of fleeing feet, mingled with the sound of heavier steps, apparently in pursuit.

"What's this I'm up against?" Cyril asked himself.

The sounds drew nearer rapidly, and above them the boy heard the frightened exclamations of a female interspersed with the fuller tones of a man's excited voice.

All at once a lovely Spanish girl, attired in a bright-hued skirt, and a black lace mantilla supported by a high back comb, dashed into the opening where Cyril stood.

A terrified expression rested on her beautiful olive countenance and shone from the depths of her liquid jet-black eyes.

She appeared almost exhausted and at her wits' end.

As she caught a glimpse of the handsome, stalwart American boy she uttered a little cry of hope and, rushing forward, threw herself almost on her knees at his feet, crying, in Spanish:

"Save me, senor! Save me!"

While Cyril did not exactly understand the words, her meaning was sufficiently clear.

She was fleeing from some danger, and was begging his protection.

Cyril was not a boy to desert any woman in distress, least of all so young and pretty a specimen of real Andalusian loveliness.

So he came to the scratch like the brave young American he was.

"I'll protect you all right," he replied, in good old Anglo-Saxon, and his attitude, though she did not understand his words, reassured the girl, for she rose and nestled close to his side, just as a splendid specimen of a Mexican ranchman hove into view, and then stopped suddenly at the unexpected picture before him.

For the moment the wind was all taken out of his sails, as it were.

His look of astonishment, however, gradually yielded to a menacing expression.

With a smothered oath he advanced upon the shrinking girl and her intrepid protector.

"What does this mean?" he demanded, haughtily, in Spanish, not a word of which the boy understood.

Cyril made no reply, probably because he did not know how to make himself understood to this picturesque-looking Mexican, who seemed to be proudly conscious of his peaked, cart-wheel hat, loaded down with gold and silver braid, his clanking spurs, his revolvers depending from his hips in embroidered holsters, his short and jaunty coat with its silver clasps, and last, but not least, his skin-tight leather breeches, that must have been drawn on as carefully as a pair of new gloves.

The Mexican repeated his remark, with sundry additions and every token of impatience, and Cyril judged he was not in a humor to be trifled with.

CHAPTER VIII.

CYRIL STANDS BETWEEN PEPITA AND SENOR GONZALES.

"I don't understand a word you say," blurted out Cyril, half-defiantly, for he was determined to stand by the beautiful girl who had thrown herself upon his protection.

"Ha! Un Americano!" exclaimed the Mexican, with a disagreeable smile.

"Yes. I'm an American all right," replied the boy, coolly.

"You do not speak Spanish, eh?"

"Muy poco" (Very little), answered Cyril.

"What are you doing here?"

"I was taking a walk."

"A walk?" sneered the Mexican. "This is the property—the hacienda—of Don Jose Calderon. You have no right here, señor."

"All right. Perhaps you'll tell me who this lady is?"

"Senorita Pepita, daughter of Don Jose."

"What is the trouble between you and the senorita? She does not seem to care for your society."

"That is my business, señor," replied the Mexican, somewhat fiercely. "You will leave her to me. Do you understand?"

"Excuse me, señor, but the senorita has claimed my protection for some reason which points to you. Under the circumstances I can't desert her."

"Ha! You dare interfere in this matter, which is none of your business?" cried the Mexican, dropping his hand on the butt of one of his revolvers.

Senorita Pepita, who all this time had been standing close to Cyril, watching the two alternately, but not understanding a word that passed between them, saw the man's action and, with a scream, sprang in front of Cyril as if to protect him.

The boy, however, was not taken unawares, just the same. He had been narrowly watching the gaudily dressed Mexican while they were talking, and was quite prepared for some such move on his part.

His hand was on his gun as quick as was the other's, and the Mexican saw that he was not going to get the drop on his young adversary as easily as he had supposed he would.

"Caramba!" he exclaimed, furiously.

Pepita, who seemed to have recovered her self-possession, stamped her foot and said something sharply in Spanish.

Cyril understood what she said.

It was short and to the point—an imperative request for the gentleman in the leather jeans to depart.

The Mexican hesitated, then, with an oath, withdrew his gun, as if he meant to polish off the senorita's defender first and settle with the lady herself afterward.

For a moment things looked serious, for Cyril, with red-hot American grit, had his revolver out and ready for instant action, while at the same time he proudly moved from behind the shelter of Pepita's person.

"Senorita Pepita has asked you to go, señor," he remarked, coolly. "So I think it's time you took a walk."

"I will kill you first!" hissed the Mexican.

"Come, now, señor, take your hand off your gun," said Cyril, resolutely. "I have the drop on you, so you may as well give in."

The Mexican hesitated, then, with an oath, withdrew his hand.

"That's right. I see you're sensible," said the boy. "Now, as the young lady has no use for you, I will have to ask you to turn around and git."

A malevolent gleam shot from the Mexican's eye.

"I will pay you for this, señor," he gritted, wrathfully. "You will find that Garcia Gonzales is not to be trifled with."

"And you, señor, have already discovered that Cyril Young can look out for himself."

At this interesting juncture another person suddenly appeared on the scene.

He was an elderly man of pleasing and rather dignified personality.

His attire was somewhat similar to that worn by Senor Gonzales, though more subdued.

His appearance was received by Senorita Pepita with a little scream of satisfaction, and she flew at once to his side and began chattering to him at a great rate, and in no little excitement, pointing at Cyril and then at Garcia Gonzales.

The Mexican was clearly discomfited by this unexpected addition to the proceedings, for without another word he turned upon his heel and strode off down the path and was soon lost beyond the cactus wall.

Then the elderly gentleman advanced, held out his hand to Cyril with a smile and greeted him in Spanish.

The boy understood him, but replied in English.

"Ah! You are an American, are you not?" asked the gentleman, in excellent English.

"I am. My name is Cyril Young, and my home is in New York."

"I am happy to make your acquaintance. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Don Jose Calderon. This is my hacienda."

Permit me to make you known to my only child, Senorita Pepita."

Cyril removed his hat and bowed politely to the handsome young lady, who returned the salute in a most bewitching manner, as her father said something to her in Spanish.

"You will excuse her, Senor Young. She does not speak English."

"Neither do I speak Spanish—at least but little. Not enough to take any chances yet awhile."

"Pepita tells me you rescued her from the undesirable attentions of Senor Gonzales, for whom she has a strong aversion. Indeed, I myself have warned him not to intrude upon this hacienda again, but he seems to have disregarded my command. He wishes to be considered a suitor for my child's hand, but I have told him that is quite impossible. His conduct to her this afternoon will make it impossible for him to present himself before her again. I thank you for interfering in Pepita's behalf, and offer you the hospitality of my hacienda as long as you choose to remain."

Don Jose spoke with the polished courtesy of a Spanish grandee of the old school, and his manner showed that he was grateful to Cyril for what he had done.

"I thank you very much for your invitation, Don Jose," answered the boy, "but I am afraid I shall not be able to accept your hospitality, as I have two companions in the wood beyond, who are probably looking for me to return by this time."

"I shall be glad to include your two friends in my invitation. Can you not prevail on them to spend a few days with us?"

He then said something to Pepita in her native tongue, whereupon she ran forward and addressed Cyril in Spanish in a most captivating way, the sense of which he clearly understood, though most of her words, spoken so rapidly, were Greek to him.

She was adding her entreaties to her father's request, and what could the boy do in the face of so charming a pleader but agree to bring his friends to the hacienda at once.

"I will send one of my people with you," said Don Jose, putting a silver whistle to his lips and blowing a shrill blast. "He will guide you right to our door."

A peon dressed out in his best togs soon appeared.

Don Jose addressed him in Spanish, whereupon the man turned, bowed to Cyril and intimated that he was at his service.

Cyril then took temporary leave of the Spaniard and his lovely daughter and returned with the servitor to the wood, where he found Will and Corney impatiently awaiting his appearance.

The Irish boy was making preparations for supper.

"You needn't bother getting supper to-night, Corney," said Cyril.

"Why not, sor? Shure, this is not a fast day, at all, at all," in surprise.

"Of course not, Corney. Sunday is generally a slow day," grinned the leader of the expedition.

He then briefly explained to his companions that he had accepted the invitation of Don Jose Calderon, proprietor of an adjacent hacienda, for the three to spend a day or two at his place.

"Sure, that's foine," replied Corney, with a grin of satisfaction.

"His daughter, Senorita Pepita, is one of the loveliest girls I ever saw in my life," concluded Cyril, by way of a clincher.

"You don't say?" said Will. "Then I'm in this, bet your life."

"The only trouble is, she doesn't speak a word of English," laughed Cyril.

"Then how the dickens——" began Will, with a comical look.

"Are we to talk to her?" interrupted Cyril. "We must brush up our Spanish."

"Faith, when yez introjuce me to her what will I be after sayin'?"

"You will say, 'Como esta usted?'"

"And what does that mane, anyway?" asked Corney, with a puzzled expression.

"It means 'How do you do?'—see?"

"Shure, that's aisy, if I can only remimber it. And what will I be afther sayin' to the ould man, Don Hosey, you call him?"

"Oh, he speaks English all right."

"Glory be for that same," replied Corney, with a look of great relief.

The pack mule was reloaded with their effects, and the three boys, preceded by Don Jose's servitor, took up their line of march for the hacienda.

CHAPTER IX.

AT THE CALDERON HACIENDA.

Nothing in Mexico ages but the people, and the smallest of them are seldom young.

Hence it was a matter of no surprise to Cyril and Will, after having passed through the cactus grove and emerged into the great space before the long pile of buildings which constituted the hacienda, looking so fresh in its clean coat of pink and green kalsomine, to learn that this house was four hundred years old.

Great doors flanked each side of the main entrance, through which the three boys were piloted into the central patio, where they were courteously received by Don Jose, Donna Calderon—his wife—and Senorita Pepita.

The ground was paved with well-scrubbed cobblestones, laid in geometrical design, while lofty pecan trees shaded the inclosure.

Fragrant roses bloomed here the year round.

The boys were duly impressed by their reception, and Will was particularly struck with the senorita; but that lovely maiden had eyes only for Cyril.

"Faith, it's in the shade yez are left, Misther Will," whispered Corney, with a grin, as Pepita motioned Cyril to a spot by her side. "Shure, if they can't talk wid their tones, they can wid their eyes, which is a moighty convaynient way for exprissin' wan's silf sometoimes, so it is."

"You're right, Cornéy," replied Will, with a shade of annoyance in his tone. "It looks as if my name was mud in that direction."

"Don't yez moind, me b'y; there are others. The woods are full, so they are, wid purty girls down here. I've seen so many of thim since we left El Paso that me heart is broke wid kapin' track of 'em."

The donna spoke a little English, but the burden of entertaining the guests was thrown upon Don Jose's shoulders.

Cyril tried his best to make himself understood by Pepita, and was satisfied he was making a wretched failure of it.

Notwithstanding that fact, they seemed to find a good deal of satisfaction in each other's company.

The senorita could certainly talk with her eyes to the queen's taste, and that is a language that is current the world over.

It is rather a dangerous method of communication between two such young and impressionable people as Cyril and Pepita.

The young American, however, was not accustomed to flee from danger, while the Spanish girl loved to coquette with it, so by the time they all went into one of the main rooms of the hacienda, all of which were grouped around the central patio, for the evening meal, Cyril and Pepita were more than half in love with each other.

The only adornment on the walls of the dining-room, to Will's surprise, were illustrations setting forth the virtues of Chihuahua beer.

What bothered Corney very much was the fact that the table, which was in the center of the room, was very high, while the chairs were very low; consequently when he sat down his chin was practically on the level with the tablecloth.

"Howly Moses!" he whispered to Will. "How are we to ate at all, at all?"

"When you're in Rome you must do as the Romans do," grinned Will.

"Well, it's moighty convaynient, so it is, bechune bites, to wipe your mouth on the tablecloth."

The table was waited on by little brown boys, as Corney called them, whose cocoanut-shaped heads were thatched with mops of black hair.

"Shure, thim wads of hair would look foine on a football player, don't yez think?" nudged Corney.

"That's what they would, now you mention it," snickered Will, seeing the point.

The dishes were served on what Corney remarked as the "tandem sthoile"—that is, strictly one thing at a time.

"What kind of soup do yez call this?" asked the Irish lad, in a loud whisper.

"That," said Don Jose, who heard him, "is sopa de arroz."

"Thank yez, sor," answered Corney. "Shure, I know as much now as I did before," he said to Will.

"That means rice soup," said Will. "Can't you see the rice in it?"

"Faith, I can, now thot I look at it. And thim things floatin' about are tomatey skins, I suppose? And there seems to

be a few other etceteres thrown in, too. Shure, it don't taste so bad, though it burns me mouth, so it does."

"The rice is fried in lard with chili," explained Will.

"Chili?" in some astonishment. "Begorra, it's anythin' but chilly."

While Corney was wrestling with the dishes that, one after another, were placed before him, Cyril, on the opposite side of the table, alongside of Pepita, was enjoying himself hugely.

"Quiere usted tomar un vaso de vino?" she asked him, sweetly, which he understood to mean would he drink a glass of wine.

As Cyril didn't drink anything stronger than water, nor smoke, either, for that matter, he was compelled to refuse his charmer's invitation.

At last the meal was over, and all adjourned to the grand sala, or best room of the house, the brick floor of which was covered with marble tiles.

Pepita was very anxious to know where Cyril and his friends were going.

She asked him the question in Spanish several times before he got hold of the drift of her remark.

Cyril answered her by telling her father that they were going to the mountains of Della Cruz, and he translated it to her.

She looked a bit disturbed at this and asked her father to tell Cyril that it was a dangerous place on account of the robbers who lurked in its fastnesses.

He found out that it was strongly suspected by the family that Senor Garcia Gonzales was connected with those rascals.

At any rate, it was on account of his shady reputation that his society was not welcome at the Calderon hacienda.

The boys were persuaded to stay two weeks at the Calderon home, and during this time Cyril made great progress in the Spanish language.

He was continually in Pepita's society, and she laid herself out to teach him all she could, thereby acquiring herself quite an insight into the English.

Will declared that it was the funniest thing in the world to hear them talk together; but, as they appeared to enjoy it, nobody had a right to kick.

"Be gorra! it's a pair of turtle doves they look loike, do yez moind?" grinned Corney, one morning. "He'll be able to walk Spanish as well as talk it wan of these foine days."

"It's about time we got a move on, if we're going to find those lost mines of Montezuma," said Will, who was all eagerness to get down to business once more.

"Faith, they won't run away bekaze we're ristin' our tin toes here, Misther Will. It's moighty hot in the sun, do yez moind, and I'd sooner sit here under wan of these gumbo trees—"

"Pecan trees, you mean," laughed Will.

"Peekan, is it? Shure, it's right yez are, for wan can peek 'round thim at a purty senorita at the other soide of the court," grinned Corney.

"Funny boy. Do you know, Corney, some of your jokes make me weary?"

"Is that a fact? Thin yez moight lie down in the shade and slape it off."

"Come off. I say, now, aren't you tired of this humdrum loafing about this old hacienda, with no one to speak to who understands you but the old gentleman?"

"It's better than hard wurruk wid the timperature at sivin hundred in the shade."

"What's that? Seven hundred?"

"Well, it fales loike it, at any rate, so it does. Be the sivin bugles that played before Jerico, I've been parboiled iver since I've been in the counthry."

"Rats! I'm going to stir Cyril up a bit. We can't stay here forever."

And so it came about that Cyril Young reluctantly decided that it was time for the party to take up their line of march once more for the Della Cruz mountains.

CHAPTER X.

THE TWIN PEAKS.

Four days later they were among the foothills of the Della Cruz mountains.

"Now," said Cyril, "we must keep our eyes skinned for the twin peaks mentioned in the professor's note-book."

"That's what," replied Will. "The question is, are they straight ahead or off to the right or to the left? If we go in the wrong direction we shall waste days in useless hot-footing."

"I mean to inquire of the natives until I get some clue to their whereabouts."

"That will be the best way," agreed Will. "You're beginning to handle the Spanish language pretty cleverly."

"Shure, why wouldn't he, wid such a purty gurl as the Senorita Pepita at his elbow all the livelong day to teach him the ins and outs of the language?" grinned Corney. "Faith, it was ourselves thot was jealous of yez, so we were."

"Don't blush, old chap," laughed Will. "We know you were pretty hard hit."

"What nonsense!" replied Cyril, with a rosy face.

The road they were now traversing was lined with immense palms, with great broad leaves, while here and there they noted the castor-oil trees.

The orchids hung on the taller trees or sat in nests in the crotch, parasitic plants of every color making the trees into nosegays.

"Faith, this is a wonderful country, so it is," remarked Corney. "It has ould Oireland baten to a sthandstill for color."

It was a full hour before they came across a native.

He was carrying water in a pair of long leather skins hung over his shoulders.

Cyril asked him if he was well acquainted with the mountains.

"Si, senor," he answered.

The boys drew a penciled representation of the twin peaks, with the flat-top mountain between, and asked him if he had ever seen anything like that in the Della Cruz.

"Si, senor," and he waved his hand toward the southeast.

"How far? How many miles?" asked Cyril.

"Doce."

"How far is thot?" asked Corney.

"Twelve miles," replied Will.

"Does he mane in a straight loine?"

The native looked at the boys very hard, and finally explained that they could reach the spot by a roundabout way through the gorge ahead, and that they would have to travel all of twenty miles before they got a sight of the peaks.

He wanted to know why the boys were going there, and when Cyril bluffed him off, he shrugged his shoulders and advised them to be on their guard against the bandits of the mountains.

"It's afraid I am we're walkin' into a bad nest, do yez moind what I'm tellin' yez. If yez remimber, both Senorita Pepita and Don Hosey himsilf warned us of thim same robbers."

"That's right," admitted Will, with a sober countenance.

"What are we going to do about it, Will?"

"Do nothing till we meet some of the gentry, and then if they interfere with us we'll fill them full of holes."

"Like a collender, faith. Do yez know, me six-shooter is gettin' rusty for want of somethin' to do."

"Talk is cheap, Corney," replied Will. "You'd be the first to run if one of those chaps jumped out of the bushes on you."

"Will yez listen to thot insult, Misther Cyril? Me run, thot's got the blood of sivinteen ginerations of kings in me vases! Yez didn't know, I suppose, that the O'Brien, a king of Munster, was a blood relation of the original McFaul from whom I'm descinded?"

"No, Corney, we weren't aware that you have royal blood in your veins," grinned Cyril.

"Well, I have, faith. Thim were great days in Oireland when the four kings reigned over the land."

"I've no doubt but it was. I'm glad to hear you've got fighting blood in you. You may have a chance to spill a little of it among these Greasers' before we get back to the Calderon hacienda."

"I hope not, Misther Cyril. Blood-letting is out of fashion."

"Not down here it isn't."

"I'm not worryin' about mesilf. I can hold me ind up, so I can."

About nine miles up the road wound the gorge referred to by the native water-carrier.

They left the road and followed the gorge until they came to one of the most beautiful waterfalls they had ever seen.

The hills rose all around it a thousand feet or more, and the sides of these hills from base to peak were densely covered with trees, whose leaves were almost a solid mass of green.

The white water leaped from this green center a hundred or two hundred feet into a curling, foaming river below.

The boys, after pausing a while to admire the picture, rode down into a kind of valley, narrow and sinuous.

At length, as dusk was falling they came suddenly upon a break in the lower hills.

The breach was quite wide, the elevations curving away to the eastward.

As they rode toward it, thinking it was high time to bivouac for the night, Cyril all at once reined in his animal and, gripping Will by the arm, pointed right ahead.

"The twin peaks!" he cried, in a voice that tingled with excitement. "Do you see them, Will, and the flat-top mountain between them, just as Professor Euclid described the scene? I have no longer any doubt but that we are in the presence of the lost mines of the Montezumas."

"I see them," responded Will, the blood rushing tumultuously through his veins as he looked. "The sun throws their shadows down this valley in the morning. Just to think, old man, we are now actually looking upon the very picture, a representation of which I drew in your room on the night of the professor's death. It hardly seems true."

"The peaks are alike as two peas, aren't they?"

"They certainly are. Exactly the same height. The ends of a ruler long enough to span them would rest evenly on the top of each."

"So thim are the pakes yez have been in search of?" said Corney, wonderingly.

"Yes, Corney, those are the real things."

"And where moight thim moines be?"

"That's what we have to find out."

"And yez are goin' to do thot wid the sun's shadder—is thot a fact?"

"We're going to try. Whether we will succeed or not is another question."

"It's to be hoped yez will. Are we goin' to thravel all night or not?"

"No. There's a stream of water yonder. We'll pitch our tent beside it."

The horses and mule were soon tethered to stakes on the grassy hillside, and it was not long before Corney had a fire kindled and supper under way.

The boys were hungry, all right, after their long ride from their last resting-place, and when everything was ready they did ample justice to the food and the fine Mexican coffee, which the Irish boy knew how to prepare in great style.

They turned in early, for they were eager to begin operations, and all night long Cyril and Will dreamed of glittering gold mines in the heart of the mountains, while Corney's slumbers were disturbed by visions of the bandits of the hills.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT CORNEY SAW IN THE MOUNTAIN.

The boys were up early next morning, and the first thing they did when they came out of the tent was to cast their eyes toward the twin peaks that stood out bold and clear against a cloudless sky.

"It was on the top of that flat mountain that the altar of the chief god Huitzilopochtli stood," said Cyril, in a tone of great interest.

"It is so stated in the histories of the Aztec people," nodded Will. "If we went up there I dare say we might find some remains of the sacrificial stone still in existence. They were mighty big, solid-looking blocks."

"I suppose the people gathered all around here during the sacrifices."

"Probably. According to the pictures I've seen of the subject, they got as close to the stone as their numbers permitted."

"Many thousands yielded up their lives on that mountain, I've no doubt."

"That's what they did. The priests had things their own way in those days."

"Christianity has been a great boon to the world."

"I wonder at what hour the sun begins to peep over the mountains? Supposing that it doesn't rise in the right place at this time of the year—what then?"

"Oh, it doesn't vary much the year round, for we are not so far from the equator."

"What is our latitude, anyway? Do you know?"

"About eighteen degrees north."

"Where did you put those pieces of glass we brought along to look at the sun through? We'd better smoke them over the fire as soon as Corney is through with it, so as to have them in readiness."

"I've got them in my hand-bag. I'll get them out, as your suggestion is a good one."

After the boys had finished their breakfasts the glasses were duly smoked and, when pronounced satisfactory, were laid aside until wanted.

"The best way for us to get a straight imaginary line from the points of the two shadows, which you and I will have to note and mark at the proper moment, will be to station Corney midway between us where he will interrupt our line of vision from point to point. Then we will start out and walk toward him very slowly, watching the mountain as closely as we can for that peculiar clue, visible at a certain point, which the professor's sudden death prevented him from recording."

"You've got the thing down fine, Cyril. We ought to be able to turn the trick, if the thing is possible of accomplishment."

The boys loafed around the trees until the sun rose above the mountain range.

To their great delight, its course carried it up almost directly in the center of the space of sky between the two peaks.

"By jingo!" cried Will. "I'm more than ever convinced of the truth of the professor's translation of those hieroglyphics on that Aztec vase. Those peaks had to lie almost due north and south in order to be available for the purpose of a sun-guide. They stand so close together that in any other position it would be much more difficult to get the sun's altitude correctly without instruments made for such a purpose."

"We can easily see the points of the shadows from here," said Cyril. "What shall we mark them with?"

"A couple of those white rocks yonder will do. As soon as we have determined the proper length of the shadows we'll stand still at our posts and Corney can bring a stone to each of us. Do you understand that, Corney?"

"Faith, I do."

Cyril then explained to the Irish boy how he was then to take his place about midway in a direct line from where they each stood beside the stones.

Finally the sun had risen high enough for them to get busy; so Cyril and Will, each with a piece of smoked glass in his hand, walked out to the edges of the two shadows, which were slowly creeping down the valley and began to keep pace with them.

Every once in a while they took a sight of the sun.

Simultaneously they came to a stop at length, as the burnished disk reached a position in the sky where a line drawn exactly through its center, as well as the boys were able to determine, would rest on the apex of each of the two peaks.

"Now, Corney, get a move on. Fetch those two stones."

Corney, who had been an interested observer of the proceedings, reluctantly left the shade of a huge palm tree and carried a stone to each of his comrades, who deposited it at their feet.

The Irish boy was then properly stationed, after some trouble, in about the center of the imaginary line, intersecting the two white stones.

Everything being in readiness for the rest of the ceremony, at a signal from Cyril, he and Will started toward each other at a rate that was exasperatingly slow to Corney, who, having nothing to do but stand in one position in the boiling sun, was fully persuaded there would soon be nothing left of him but a grease spot.

Finally they reached Corney, without having observed anything out of the ordinary in the face of the distant mountain.

"Well," asked Will, "what did you see, Cyril?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?" disappointedly.

"Not a thing. And you? Didn't you observe any uncommon point in the aspect of the mountain?"

Will shook his head.

"Well, what do you think?" asked Cyril, whose high hopes had also fallen to the zero point.

"I think that the landmark, whatever it was, must have been wiped out some time during the four hundred years that has passed since the mines were closed up."

"Looks that way, doesn't it?" replied Cyril.

"So yez didn't see nothin' at all, at all?" said Corney. "What a pity!"

Then he shaded his eyes and looked toward the mountain himself.

"Trosh! It's a hole bechune the hills I see from here, wid a funny-looking tree at the far end of it. Do yez think there's anythin' in that?"

"Let me see!" cried both boys in a breath, with great eagerness.

"Well, yez can't both see to wanst, for when I move my

head this way the hole isn't there. Nor is it there, faith, when I move me head this way. I can only see it when I stand here."

"You look first, Cyril. That's your right as boss of the expedition," said Will.

So Cyril took Corney's place, and he easily made out the fissure in the mountainside, with the odd-looking tree at its further extremity.

Then he stepped aside and allowed Will to look, and then Will saw the same thing.

"Get another white stone, Corney, and plant it right here. I really believe we've got onto the clew, after all, for certainly this cut in the mountain, with the tree beyond, can't be seen from any other point of this imaginary line."

"Now," said Will, after Corney had marked the spot with another white stone, "let's get under the trees and cool off. I'm as hot as the dickens. We'll talk the matter over and consider what we'll do next."

"Corney, you're all to the good. If it hadn't been for your sharp eyes we would probably have missed the object at which we were aiming."

"Thru for yez, Misther Cyril. Faith, it's funny I found the right spot, all accyidental loike, while yez two were walkin' the line like a pair of monkeys on a tight-rope. Shure, it's the Oirish that get there every toime."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SPECTER OF THE MOUNTAIN.

The boys were eager to investigate the defile in the mountainside, but it was a good hour before they felt like making a move out into the blazing sunshine again.

Before starting they took a bite of cold lunch.

Then they marched out to the central white stone, whence the fissure was observable, and from that point started up the valley toward the foot of the flat-top mountain.

Owing to the inequalities of the ground they soon lost sight of the distant break in the hillside; but they felt reasonably sure that they would eventually reach a spot close enough to the place to locate it.

It was hot work hoofing it in the sun, over rocks and boulders, but they persevered, for the end in view was worth the effort.

At last they reached the foot of the mountain, which was covered with trees.

"I hope it won't be like looking for a needle in a haystack to find that hole," said Will.

"It's somewhere around here, for certain," replied Cyril.

At last, after an hour's search, they came upon it—a tall, narrow cleft in the face of the mountain, at the far end of which was a fantastic-looking bleached tree, withered and dead.

They entered the defile and made their way up to the dead tree.

It was a weird spot, lonesome and forsaken.

The mountain rose in sheer elevation hundreds of feet above their heads.

"Do you think this is the entrance to the famous mines of Montezuma?" asked Will, with a thrill of excitement.

"If there's any virtue in signs, I think it is," replied Cyril.

"Shure, it looks more loike the entrance to Hades, so it does," said Corney.

"What's the next step, now we're here?" asked Will.

"You've got me," answered Cyril, scratching his head.

"Probably it's a matter of digging straight into the mountain ahead."

"Faith that's a foine prospect of hard worruk," said Corney, regarding the situation dubiously.

"You don't get much in this world unless you work for it," replied Cyril.

"Be hivins! That's no lie."

"I think we've seen all we want to see for to-day," remarked Will. "We'll bring up the shovels to-morrow morning and start the ball rolling early. In the meantime we can move our tent nearer."

"That's a good plan," said Cyril.

They walked to the entrance of the defile and, after taking a careful survey of the surroundings, started back to their tent.

In some way they managed to get separated, and the first thing Cyril knew Will and Corney had disappeared.

He kept on his way slowly, looking back every once in a while, but there was no sign of his companions.

"I wonder where they've got to?" he mused.

He couldn't guess, so he went on, and in due time arrived at his tent.

After watching in vain half an hour for his friends to appear, he began to feel drowsy.

So he retired into the tent, lay down on his blankets and was soon asleep.

Two hours later he was aroused by the appearance of Will and Corney.

He knew by their faces and manner that something out of the ordinary had occurred.

"Where have you chaps been?" he asked, curiously.

"Don't say a wurrud. Yez missed the adventure of your life," cried Corney.

"What have I missed, Will?" asked Cyril, eagerly.

"It will knock you silly when I tell you," replied Will, with a serious face.

"Well, don't keep me in suspense, old man."

"Corney and I stumbled onto the headquarters of the mountain bandit gang."

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Cyril, half-incredulously.

"Isn't it a fact, Corney?" said Will, appealing to the Irish lad.

"It's gospel truth, Misther Cyril, on me wurrud as a Mc-Faul."

Gracious! So that villainous crowd are right here on our ground?" replied Cyril, aghast.

"That's what they are," answered Will. "And that fellow Garcia Gonzales, whom you had the run-in with, is the chief of them, too."

"How do you know?" asked Cyril, anxiously.

"Bekase we seen the ould villain," replied Corney.

"But he isn't old, Corney," said Cyril. "He's a good-looking chap of about thirty."

"Shure, that's roight. I mane he's old in rascality, so I do."

"How could you identify the fellow as Gonzales?"

"Didn't Will and meself hear thim men of his call him Gonzales? But wa've stronger proof than that, more's the pity," added Corney, with a melancholy shake of the head.

"What do you mean, Corney? And why do you look so strange?"

"Yez had betther tell him, Will."

"I have had news for you, Cyril," ventured Will, reluctantly.

"Bad news!" cried Cyril. "What do you mean?"

"That rascal Gonzales has carried off Pepita Calderon from her father's hacienda."

"And brought her down here to his den in the mountains, where he intends to force her to marry him."

"How do you know he has?" cried Cyril, greatly excited.

"Because we saw her a prisoner in his underground headquarters."

"Are you telling me the truth, Will Adams?" ejaculated Cyril, almost violently.

"Ask Corney."

"Shure, didn't I see the senorita wid me blissid two eyes?" corroborated the Irish boy, nodding his head positively.

"Pepita in the power of that villain!" groaned Cyril. "Something must be done, boys, to save her."

"What can we do against the crowd?" replied Will, discouragingly.

"What can we do? We must do something. I, for one, am not going to desert her, not if it costs me my life!" cried Cyril, the fire of resolution flashing from his eyes.

"I'm ready to do anything, Cyril; but—"

"Tell me how you made this discovery?" demanded Cyril, abruptly.

"I don't know how we managed to lose you," said Will, "but all at once you were out of sight. We started to retrace our steps, when suddenly the ground gave way beneath us and down we went somewhere, the bushes closing over our heads, leaving us in the dark. I struck a match and we looked around. We were in a kind of cavern. Noting that it would not be hard to crawl out into the air again, Corney and I determined to investigate the place. We made torches of brushwood and went ahead. The place went right into the mountain, and we followed it. Presently we came to a turn in the place and stopped, for our torches were nearly burned out, and we were afraid to venture further."

"That's right, faith. It's afeard we'd get lost in the bowels of the earth we were," put in Corney.

"While we were considering whether to go on a little further or retreat, we heard voices not far away. That excited our curiosity, and we crept forward to investigate, after dropping our expiring torches on the ground. We saw a bright gleam of light ahead and figures of men moving about and stretched upon the ground, smoking cigarettes. Finally our course was barred by a lot of brush that partially choked the passage. We had a good view from here of the room beyond. Soon

after we came to a halt at this spot the man I presently learned to be Gonzales, the bandit leader, entered the cavernous apartment and sent the men away somewhere. Then it was that Pepita Calderon was brought in by a couple of the rascals, and you might have knocked us both down with a feather at that moment, so surprised were we to see her there. I am not any too well up in Spanish, but I managed to understand a word here and there, and sometimes a whole sentence. Then actions speak louder than words, so that I tumbled to the drift of the interview. Gonzales had evidently kidnaped the senorita, and I made out that his purpose was immediate marriage. She scorned his advances to the queen's taste, but he gave her the laugh. She was in his power, he said, and intimated that she had as much show to escape him as water has of running up the mountainside. He gave her twelve hours to consider his proposal, and then the two rascals who brought her before him reappeared and carried her away again. Corney and I then made our way back to the cavern into which we had tumbled, found the spot we had entered at, and scrambled up into the outside air. We hadn't more than got there before Gonzales, and a dozen of his men came riding out of the defile, dashed up the valley toward the waterfall and disappeared."

Will stopped as if that was the whole story.

Cyril made no remark for several minutes.

He seemed to be thinking—thinking how he could help Pepita out of her terrible predicament.

"We must take advantage of Gonzales's absence and try to rescue her," he said, at length. "You say a dozen men rode off with him. Probably that was the larger part of his gang. Maybe only two or three were left behind. We ought to be able to surprise and do them up. Are you game to back me up in this, both of you?" he said, looking at his chum and Corney.

"You can count on me," replied Will, sturdily.

"And on me, too, faith," answered Corney. "I'm wid yez, be the hoofs of Balaam's rabbit! It's spilin' I am for a scrimmage."

"Get supper ready, Corney. We'll set out for that hole you fell into just as soon as it gets dark. Do you think you'll be able to find it again?"

"I think so," answered Will. "I took the bearings of the place before we left the neighborhood."

"All right," replied Cyril, cheerfully. "The safety of Pepita is of more importance than all the gold in the lost mines of the Montezumas."

He said this in a tone that caused Corney to wink impressively at Will.

They wanted no better evidence that Cyril was thoroughly in love with the beautiful daughter of Done Jose Calderon.

As soon as the sun set darkness fell quickly upon the face of the landscape.

The boys lost no time in setting out upon the strenuous job Cyril had decided upon.

The dark mountainside loomed up before them as they advanced.

The gloom of the night was partially relieved by the brightness of the star-bedecked sky, but the stillness which brooded over nature's vast solitude was curiously oppressive.

"You are sure the opening in the mountainside is somewhere about here?" asked Cyril, as they drew near to the locality pointed out by Will.

"Yes. I know it by that bleached rock over yonder."

Cyril raised the lantern he carried and flashed its bright light in the direction his chum was pointing.

A black opening appeared a short distance in front of them.

"Is that it?" he asked, drawing his revolver as a precautionary measure.

"No," replied Will. "That isn't the spot. But what is that, anyway?"

The three boys advanced toward the black-looking hole.

Suddenly, without warning, a volume of thick white smoke issued from the opening, and as it melted away there was revealed, apparently floating in the air, a phosphorescent-draped skeleton.

"Howly mother!" gasped Corney, falling upon his knees in terror.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE HANDS OF THE BANDITS.

Cyril and Will started back in surprise, not to say consternation, as the gruesome figure unfolded its outlines before their startled gaze and then seemed to advance upon them.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Will. "What do you call that?"

"The saints presarve us! Take it away!" howled Corney, thoroughly frightened, if ever a boy was.

The boys fell back a short distance, without taking their eyes from the spectral vision, which continued to hover in the dim air, waving its bony arms about at random, as though warning them away from the spot.

Cyril was the first to recover from the feeling of awe the "ghost" incited.

"It's some fake," he said. "Our presence has been discovered by the bandits and they are using this device to scare us from the locality. That must be one of the entrances to their headquarters."

"It isn't the place Corney and I fell into this afternoon," said Will, beginning to feel easier in his mind after Cyril's words. "What shall we do? If it's a fake, we'd better make a dash at it and do the old thing up."

"No," replied Cyril. "That won't do at all. If those chaps in there, who are no doubt watching us, see that their spook isn't going to have a proper effect on us, they'll probably begin shooting next, and we may get hurt. As long as this isn't the right hole, we'd best pretend to be scared off. The other hole must be near here. We'd better search for it."

"It's somewhere among those tall bushes, I am almost sure," replied Will. "It is certainly not far from that white rock."

Accordingly the boys withdrew and, taking a roundabout course, approached the locality from an opposite point of the compass, keeping well within the line of bushes close to the hillside and observing great caution.

Will was in advance, with his eyes on the alert for some sign showing the proximity of the hole.

They were now out of sight of the place where the draped skeleton had appeared to them, but were drawing nearer to the spot every moment.

Suddenly as Will took a step forward into the bushes he went right down into them before Cyril's eyes, vanishing like a sprite through a stage trap-door.

Cyril came to a dead stop, as did Corney behind him.

Dropping down on his knees, the boy uncovered the lantern and thrust it into a yawning hole among the bushes.

Its bright rays showed Will scrambling to his feet eight feet below the surface.

"Hurt yourself, old chap?" asked Cyril, in a voice of some concern.

"Not a bit. Come on down. This is the hole we were looking for," replied Will, glancing upward.

"Sure of that, are you?"

"Yes."

"Follow me, Corney," said Cyril, springing down into the opening, where he landed on a mass of soft dirt.

Corney followed immediately after him.

"Give me the lantern and I'll lead the way," said Will.

He swung the light to and fro as they advanced under the mountain, and the flashing rays revealed a long, narrow cavern that seemed to have been fashioned by the hand of man.

At one point a flat rock protruded, the face of which was as smooth as a bit of unpolished marble.

It was covered from top to bottom with Aztec symbols and hieroglyphics.

"Look at that," cried Will, pointing at it. "We seem to be right on the stamping grounds of Montezuma's subjects. Who knows but we may have blundered upon one of the approaches of the mines. If we have, 'twill save us an awful lot of trouble."

"I'm not bothering about the Aztec mines just now, Will. They will keep, same as they have kept for four hundred years. It's Pepita's safety I'm interested in at this moment. Come on and find that passage which leads into the headquarters of the bandits. We have no time to lose. Gonzales may return with his followers at any moment, and then the fat would be in the fire."

So Will started forward again, and in a few minutes they branched off to the left.

"This is the passage," whispered Will. "We've got to go cautiously now."

"All right. You know the ropes."

They went on.

"Here is the heap of brushwood which blocked our way this afternoon," and Will threw a glimmer upon the obstruction.

"Where is that room or cavern you say you looked into?" asked Cyril, in a low voice.

"Right in front of us."

"It's as dark as pitch there."

"That's because most of the crowd are away, I guess."

"We must make an opening here," said Cyril.

This was not a difficult matter to do, and they soon passed into the robbers' den under the flat-top mountain.

Flashing the lantern about, they found themselves in a big cavern, in which were scattered wooden benches, rude tables of the same material, and many other evidences of occupation by man, plainly showing that this was the general gathering place for a crowd of rough-and-ready Mexican outlaws.

Two openings led in opposite directions from the cavern.

"Which way did they take Pepita?" asked Cyril, anxiously.

"That way," replied Will, pointing to the opening running toward the center of the mountain.

"Then that's the way we will go," said Cyril, taking the lantern and now leading the way himself.

They passed a number of empty caverns, much smaller in size than the one they had entered first.

Each of these they carefully scrutinized, but found them bare and untenanted.

They did not have to go far, however, before they came to one across which a bit of gaudy drapery was hung.

Cyril held up his hand, for he had noticed a glimmer of light coming through the edge of the folds of the fabric.

Putting down the lantern, he drew back a corner of the drapery and looked in.

The room, if we may call it such, was elegantly and picturesquely furnished.

The rough walls were hung to the height of a dozen feet with a material similar to that which shut off the entrance.

The floor was covered with a carpet rug of brilliant color.

There were polished tables, softly upholstered chairs and lounges—in fact, all the elegant belongings of a refined Mexican boudoir.

A rough-looking Mexican was lounging in a chair near the entrance, lazily puffing the inevitable cigarette, while at the far end of the place Pepita lay upon a richly ornamented couch.

The reader may as well be informed that this elegant retreat under the mountain was Garcia Gonzales's private retiring room.

Here he took his meals and slept, when not abroad among the haunts of civilization.

Cyril took it all in with a curious eye, and his blood quickened in his veins when his gaze rested upon the lovely girl who had become more to him than all else in the wide world—even his own family.

He motioned to his companions to take a look inside, and then he laid down to them in earnest whispers his plan of action.

At a given signal he drew the curtain aside and, closely followed by Will and Corney, confronted the Mexican ruffian who was on guard.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE AZTEC GOD HUITZILOPOCHTLI.

The bandit sprang to his feet with a rude oath and reached for his gun.

"Stop!" cried Cyril to him in Spanish, "or you are a dead man."

The fellow saw the three gleaming revolvers pointed at him and, perceiving the folly of resistance, threw up his hands reluctantly.

Senorita Calderon, who had not been asleep, sprang to her feet in open-eyed surprise.

"Bind and gag that rascal," said Cyril to his companions.

It took but a moment to do this, as the rascal was thoroughly cowed.

Then Cyril turned and advanced toward the couch.

"Pepita," he exclaimed, tenderly.

The girl swayed for a moment in the air, then, with a little cry of delight, to which the boy's name was coupled, she rushed across the room and fairly sprang into Cyril's arms.

Her arms twined about his neck, in her impulsive Spanish way, and she began murmuring incoherent expressions of endearment as she rested her beautiful head on his shoulder.

It was an intoxicating moment for the young American, and he seemed to forget the perilous situation in which they all stood.

Will, however, stepped up and brought him back to earth again.

"Come," he said. "We must get out of this, if we expect to escape with our lives. We have no time to spare, Cyril."

His chum nodded.

"Come, Pepita, we must go," and, with Will leading the

way, lantern in one hand and cocked revolver in the other, they passed out into the underground passage.

They reached the main cavern without mishap, and were on the point of entering the brush-covered passage, when suddenly Garcia Gonzales and several of his men appeared at the other opening.

"Gee whiz!" cried Will.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Corney.

"Great Scott!" muttered Cyril.

Then a scream from Pepita.

"El demonis!" roared Gonzales, furiously.

Cyril pushed the girl into the passage and drew his revolver.

"Seize them!" shouted the Mexican in Spanish.

"Stand back!" cried Cyril, raising his pistol.

Gonzales, who was no coward, drew his weapons from their holsters and, with a hurried aim, fired at the boys.

Two bullets whizzed by their heads and flattened themselves against the wall, and under cover of the smoke the other ruffians dashed forward.

Three revolvers cracked and three bandits went down wounded.

Taking advantage of their confusion, the boys rushed through into the passage and hurried away.

But Gonzales, with others of his band, was promptly on their heels.

So quickly did they follow that the boys, pushing the girl forward in the dark—for they had covered the lantern, lest it should draw the rascals' fire, took the wrong turn and hurried further away by a new course into the depths of the mountain.

And as they ran the sound of their pursuers faded away, for Garcia Gonzales imagined they must have gone in the other direction, toward an opening in the mountain, the existence of which he did not know, but naturally surmised they had accidentally discovered.

"We have taken the wrong road," cried Will, in a moment or two.

"Can't help that," returned Cyril. "It's too late now to undo the error. We must hide in here until we can find a chance to escape by the way we came."

So they kept on, using the lantern now to light their way, till all at once they came out into a vast underground chamber, in the center of which stood a monstrous graven image of sinister aspect.

It had a broad face, wide mouth and terrible eyes.

The light of the lantern was reflected from a thousand tiny sparkling points of the hideous figure, for it was covered with gold, pearls and precious stones, and was girt about with golden serpents.

On its neck a fitting ornament were the faces of men wrought in silver and their hearts in gold.

"Howly staff of St. Patrick! What's that?" cried Corney, with goggling eyes.

The four fugitives gazed on this monster with feelings of awe akin to terror.

Pepita was almost overcome, and clung closely to her young protector.

"Cyril," cried Will, in a tone which sent a thrill through his chum's veins and for the moment made him even forget the girl of his heart, "do you know where we are? We're in the mines of Montezuma—where probably man has not penetrated for four hundred years."

"How do you know that?" whispered Cyril, in an agitated voice.

"How do I know? This is the god Huitzilopochtli, which stood on the top of this mountain, and which, according to the words of the professor's notebook, was removed to the mines before they were sealed up."

"Great Caesar! Can that be possible?"

"It is the truth, for have not we both read the description of this famous god in Aztec history? See, it tallies to the dot. The girdle of golden serpents, the men's faces and hearts, the jewels and precious stones! It is true to the descriptions handed down from the time of Cortez."

"I believe you are right," breathed his chum, stirred beyond measure at the thought that they were the first, since the days of Montezuma, to gaze upon the chief god of the Aztecs—in fact, outside of Cortez himself, who had been specially accorded the privilege, they were the only white-skinned persons who had ever looked upon its awful features.

As the boys grew somewhat accustomed to their weird surroundings they began to examine the image closer.

"Cyril," cried Will, excitedly, "these precious stones seem to be of the finest quality. There must be a fortune or two upon this image. Talking about digging for gold and silver! Why, that isn't a circumstance to picking these diamonds and pearls, and sapphires and rubies. This is like the garden Aladdin wandered into the 'Arabian Nights' story. I tell you, Cyril, if we can get away with this treasure alone we're made for life."

"Shure, we'll be afther fillin' our pockets and our boots, he gob, wid the stuff," grinned Corney, in high glee at the prospect of getting rich quick.

"You forget one important thing," said Cyril. "Our retreat is cut off by the bandits, who may come in here after us at any moment."

"By the great toe of St. Peter! That's a fact, so it is," exclaimed Corney, with a fearsome glance into the gloom behind them.

"Don't you worry," said Will. "If those chaps knew of this place they'd have had this image stripped long ago."

"But in hunting for us they may flounder on it like we did ourselves," replied Cyril.

"Well, I'm going to get some of those diamonds right away," said Will, his eagerness to gather in the valuable brilliants overcoming every other consideration.

"Corney," asked Cyril, "do you mind stepping back to the entrance of this room and standing guard for a while?"

"I'll do that wid all the pleasure in the world, Misther Cyril, if yez will gather in the gold and precious stones, so that we can get out wid somethin' whin the toime comes."

"That's what we're going to do, Corney."

"Thin it's mesilf will stand guard, and I'll blow the top of the head off the first haythen that sticks his ugly nose this way, so I will."

CHAPTER XV.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

Pepita was persuaded to hold the lantern while Cyril and Will proceeded to denude the god of its precious belongings.

With the butts of their revolvers they loosened the gems from their fastening, and the pile which they deposited in their hats, after they had filled their pockets, made their mouths water.

In actual value the jewels were worth over a quarter of a million, for most of the stones were large and of the finest quality, as befitted so distinguished a personage as the chief god of the Aztecs.

During the pillage they were not disturbed by their enemies, and finally Corney was recalled and told to secrete as many of the valuables about his person as he could carry.

Pepita also managed to stow away a great many of the finest gems, handed to her by Cyril.

"We'll come back another time and get the golden serpents and other gold and silver ornaments," said Cyril. "And then we'll see what else these mines contain."

"Shure, wid these moines on our hands we'll soon be as rich as Misther Rockefeller, so we will," cried Corney, in a tone of intense satisfaction.

"What will you do with your share, Corney?" asked Will.

"My share! Begob! I'll go back to ould Oireland, buy the country and have mesilf elected king, loike me great ancister, the O'Brien."

"In that case, if I were you, I'd tow the island over here and annex it to the United States," grinned Will.

"Shure, England wouldn't loike to lose us, Misther Will. Oireland is the brightest jewel in the British crown, do yez moind that, now."

While Cyril and Pepita were talking—or cooing, as Corney called it—together, Will and the Irish boy, with the aid of the lantern, started on a tour of discovery around the great cavern.

They found wide steps of stone leading up to what appeared to have been the main entrance.

These steps terminated at a wide platform, from which galleries led off in several directions, penetrating the bowels of the mines.

The entrance itself was blocked up by a wall of masonry, how thick the boys could only conjecture.

"It's a foine time of it we'd had diggin' our way through this, don't yez think, Misther Will," grinned Corney, as he rapped upon the well-set stones of four hundred years' standing.

"It would have taken a few boxes of dynamite to have made an impression on it," replied Will.

At that moment they heard a strange, far-away grumbling and muttering in the depth of the mine.

"What's that?" asked Corney, his hair beginning to rise on his head, for the sound was weird and uncanny.

"Give it up," said Will. "It sounded a long way off."

"Maybe it's the spooks of the ould haythen Aztecs kickin' becase we've been afther robbin' their image."

The sound came again, louder than before, rolling up through the galleries and filling the big cavern with the reverberations.

"Howly St. Patrick! I don't fancy that at all, at all," shivered Corney. "I'd rather go up ag'inst live Greasers than dead men any day, so I would."

"Why, that's only some subterranean noise away down in the bowels of the earth."

"Thin the 'arth must be havin' an attack of colic, begob!"

"Well, let's get back to Cyril and the senorita. They must be kind of lonesome down there in the dark."

"Don't yez believe it. They kin see well enough by the light of wan another's eyes. And as to bein' lonesome, shure, it's a case of two is company and three is a crowd," he grinned.

"I shouldn't wonder, Corney; Pepita is a peach."

"Yez mane peaches and cream."

Again came up that strange subterranean noise, as if something was wrong far beneath them.

Corney was anxious to rejoin Cyril and make a break for the outside air.

He was very superstitious, and he didn't like that sound for a cent.

So they descended, and found Cyril and Pepita perfectly contented at the feet of the hideous god.

"Well, what did you find out?" asked the young leader.

"We discovered the original entrance to these mines," replied Will.

"Did you?" said Cyril, with a look of interest.

"It's all blocked up by masonry."

"Then there's no show of getting out that way?"

"Not the slightest. It would take several charges of dynamite to make an impression on it."

"Did yez hear that noise off somewhere?" asked Corney.

"Yes. Strange, isn't it?"

"Faith, it's more than strange. Yez don't think it's the ghosts of thim ould Aztecs that used to wurruk here four hundred years ago, do yez?"

"Why, of course not, Corney. What put such an idea into your head?"

"Well, sor, you know we've been afther dissectin' their image—"

"Been doing what?"

"Dissectin'—robbin', do yez moind, their big god."

"You mean desecrating," laughed Cyril.

"I s'pose so. I'm not up in thim big wurruks. We've been after st'aln' thim jewels, and maybe they don't loike it, Misther Cyril."

"That's right, Corney," with a wink at Will; "perhaps they don't. Maybe we'd better make a start for the back door."

"I'm wid yez. I'd rather foight me way out than stay here and listen to that awful wail. Puts me in moind of the banshee, so it does."

"Did you ever hear a banshee?"

"Niver. And I don't want to, either."

"Well, boys, I guess we'll make a move."

As they gathered up their hats full of gems that curdling sound came up again from the depths of the mine.

"Saints presarve us! Do yez hear thim? They know we're preparin' to go, and they don't like the idea of thim gems goin', too. Maybe they'll foller us."

"Perhaps in that case," laughed Cyril, "you'd better go ahead with the lantern, and we'll cover your retreat."

"Faith, I will, wid pleasure," and grabbing the lantern he started for the passage.

"Keep your eyes wide open for the Mexicans," warned Will. "You'd better keep the lantern covered."

Corney was about to "douse the glim," when suddenly there came to their ears a murmuring sound down the passage.

"It's thim Greasers comin' this way at last," he said.

Lights began to flash and twinkle in the distance and the growl of many voices came nearer.

"We're caught in a trap, I'm afraid," said Cyril.

"We must retreat to the galleries," suggested Will. "We may be able to hide there."

They hurried back and mounted the stone steps to the platform, taking refuge behind a pile of loose masonry.

In a few moments Garcia Gonzales, leading his band of rascals, swarmed with lanterns and torches into the great cavern below.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

The whole gang came to a pause in front of the image, whose presence rather astonished the bandits.

Gonzales, who was intent on recovering Pepita, soon stirred his men into activity again.

Under his directions, they spread themselves all over the place, and, finding nothing, began to ascend the steps.

At that critical moment the subterranean noise was renewed, only much louder.

It came rolling up like the mutterings of approaching thunder.

Somehow or another both Cyril and Will thought of that afternoon of storm on Staten Island when Professor Euclid's life went out with the thunderbolt.

All at once a slight thrill or tremble seemed to pervade the mountain depths.

The bandits paused and began to jabber in an excited way.

But Gonzales swore at them and urged them on in tones they dared not disobey.

The boys hoped to escape observation behind the masonry; unfortunately, one sharp-eyed Mexican saw Corney's head in the glare of his torch, and he uttered a shout.

"By the tail of Pat Murphy's cow, it's diskivered we are," Corney cried, and he fired his revolver point-blank at the rascal who had seen him.

Down went the robber with a howl of pain, and he didn't get up again.

Crack! Crack!

Cyril and Will bowled over two more of the enemy.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The revolvers of several bandits began to spit fire.

"Be careful!" roared Gonzales, bounding up the steps. "See that you hit not the senorita," he added, warningly.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The three boys returned the fire, with all the advantage in their favor for the time being.

Two more of the bandits went down.

The uproar was terrific in that enclosed place, but above it all came louder and louder the underground noises, and once more a kind of sickening tremor shook the depths of the flat-top mountain.

"Deliver up the senorita," roared Gonzales.

"Never!" answered Cyril, in Spanish.

"Carramba! You die, then!" hissed the villain.

Spitting flashes of fire sprang from behind the blocks of masonry where the fugitives were hidden.

Gonzales clasped his hand to his side with a terrible oath.

"Kill! Kill! Kill!" he shrieked, as he staggered back and sank down on the top step.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

The revolvers of the bandits blazed in a lurid volley.

But the end was near at hand.

An end terrible and awe-inspiring.

A thunderous roar penetrated the mountain to its very center.

The spirits of a million shrieking Aztecs seemed to fill the smoke-saturated atmosphere of the place.

The earth shook and swayed in a mighty convulsion.

"We are lost!" shrieked Pepita, throwing herself upon Cyril. "The earthquake!"

With a crash the roof of the cavern split apart and tons on tons of earth and rock fell in.

Another fearful reverberation followed on the heels of the first.

The mountain shook and swayed again, and a deafening roar filled the ears of the now thoroughly terrified lads, who expected to be crushed in the falling debris.

A great crack ran up through the solid mass of masonry at their back.

Then, as the third and last shock of the earthquake came, the masonry crumbled away behind them.

The whole mountain seemed to recede.

Dust filled their eyes and choked them.

The world seemed coming to an end.

And then—the three boys knew no more.

The morning sun was just peeping over the mountain ridge into the defile, covering the bleached trunk of the dead tree landmark with a blaze of glory, when Cyril Young opened his eyes upon the world once more.

"Where the dickens am I, and what has occurred?"

He lay on the edge of a mound of debris, and for some moments all he could do was to try and recover his confused senses.

Then he rose on his elbow and looked around.

At his side, with her lovely head pillowed on one arm, lay the Senorita Pepita Calderon, white and unconscious.

With a cry of consternation Cyril sprang up and gathered her into his arms.

"Great Scott! Something dreadful has happened!" he breathed, as he chafed her hands and face and tried to arouse the insensible girl.

He looked around him in wonder.

Will Adams half-reclined against a huge boulder, a dark-red blood spot showing under his curly brown hair.

While Corney McFaul was just coming to himself, a yard away.

Three empty American revolvers lay scattered on the ground, while three hats full of precious stones were glistening in the sunshine.

"Upon me sowl, are we alive or not?" ejaculated Corney, as he got on his feet and looked at Cyril, busy over Pepita.

"Oh, I guess we're alive all right," replied Cyril, as he noticed that the girl was beginning to revive and that Will was stirring.

"And how did we get here, do yez know? The last I remember we were in the dark, wid the mountain tumblin' in upon us. Be the crook of St. Anthony! I nivr thought to see the light of day ag'in."

"I never can tell you, Corney. My sensations were the same as yours—I thought my last hour had come. The earth was heaving and the rocks were caving in about us. The very end of the world seemed to be at hand."

"Glory be! That was the 'arthquake."

"I believe we're at the entrance to the mines, which must have opened up and let us out at the last minute."

"Shure, thin, they were most gentlemanly and accommodatin' to do that, whin they moight have swallered us as delicate little morsels in company wid the rocks and other stuff. I wonder if that ould god inside is ristin' now in the bowels of the earth, or where it is. Faith, it's a great pity, so it is, that so much goold has gone to waste."

"Never mind, Corney. We're rich boys, just the same, for the jewels are left," and he pointed at the filled hats.

"Be the long hair of Samson! Yez are roight. Hurroo! We're made for life."

"Hello," exclaimed Will, at this juncture, "what are you making so much noise about, Corney?"

"Oh, it's alive yez are? Shure, Misther Cyril and mesilf were just sayin' what an elegant corpse ye made in the sunshine," and the Irish boy grinned broadly.

Pepita opened here eyes like one in a daze.

"Where am I?" she murmured, in soft Spanish.

"Where do you think, sweetheart?" answered Cyril, fondly.

"My Cyril!" throwing her arms about his neck.

"Pepita, darling!"

"Will yez listen to thot?" chuckled Corney to Will. "Isn't it a foine thing to make love in Spanish?"

The four young people stood up and took a survey of their surroundings.

They found they were not far from the entrance to the defile.

That part of the low-top mountain had been shattered by the throes of the earthquake.

Behind them what had been the big cavern was now filled up with a confused mass of stone and rock.

Only the two topmost stairs were visible of the flight which had led up to the gallery.

Here and there under the debris an arm or a leg of one of the Mexican brigands protruded itself, a ghastly reminder of that night of horror.

"Thim blaggards got it in the neck, so they did," said Corney. "Shure, only for thot blissid 'arthquake we'd have been done up entoirely."

Cyril ventured a little way inside, Pepita holding him tremblingly by the arm.

As his eyes wandered over the rock and ruin they suddenly fell upon one figure but partially buried in the mass.

He and the senorita recognized the ghastly face of Garcia Gonzales.

"Faith, it's as dead as a herrin' he is," said Corney, who came up at that moment.

"He'll never harm you any more, Pepita," whispered Cyril. The Spanish girl shuddered and turned away her head.

Then they went out into the sunshine, after carefully gathering up the hats which contained the precious stones.

"Come, let us go down to our tent," said Cyril.

They took their way out of the defile and across the valley. When they came to the neighborhood where their canvas shelter had been erected they found that the bandits had cut it down, had scattered their belongings or carried them away, and had taken possession of their animals.

It was a nice predicament they now found themselves in in the midst of the wilderness.

CHAPTER XVII.

A GOLDEN RISK ENDS WITH A GOLDEN HARVEST.

"Shure, it's nothin' to ate we'll be gettin' at all, at all," groaned Corney, as he noted the wanton destruction perpetrated by the bandits the evening before.

The boys, searching about the place, managed to find a can or two of American preserved chicken where the Greasers had thrown them, and of the contents of these they made a satisfactory meal, washing it down with pure spring water.

With pieces of the torn canvas they made three impromptu bags to carry the precious stones, tying the folding ends together as one does the cloth around a plum pudding before it is put into the pot to boil.

Then they took up their line of march up the valley toward the waterfall.

They had not proceeded far before Corney, who was in advance, gave a shout of joy.

"Hurroo! It's not shanks' mare we'll have to depind upon, afther all."

"What do you mean, Corney?" asked Will, hurrying up.

"Shure, there's the horses of thim defunct Greasers. Don't yez see thim nibblin' the grass wid all the contintment in the wurruuld?"

"You're right, Corney. This is great luck."

They waited for Cyril and Pepita to come up, to whom they pointed out the animals.

"We might as well take the whole caboodle with us. Don Jose will find them useful," said Will.

As they drew near the animals Corney suddenly uttered an exclamation.

"Look yonder, will yez? There's siveral horsemen comin' down the valley. Faix, I hope it ain't more of thim bandits. It's a nice kittle of fish we'd be in."

The newcomers were too far off to be identified, but they were approaching at a smart pace.

There was no way of escaping the notice of the approaching horsemen, so the boys got out and reloaded their revolvers while they walked toward the tethered animals.

One man in a broad sombrero rode ahead of the others, as if in command of the party.

Something about him attracted and held the senorita's attention.

Her eyes took on a strange gleam, while her bosom rose and fell, as if her heart was beating furiously under her bodice.

She gripped Cyril's arm tightly and stopped him, then leaned forward, her lips half-parted in her excitement.

"Mi padre!" (My father) she suddenly screamed.

Her cry arrested Will and Corney.

"What's thot she says?" asked the Irish lad.

"By George! It's Don Jose!" cried Will, in high glee.

"Don Hosey, is it? Hurroo! The country's saved, so it is!"

It was, indeed, Don Jose Calderon with half a dozen of his peon servitors, all well armed, who were bowling down the valley in search of Garcia Gonzales and Pepita.

The meeting between father and daughter was a joyful one.

And when she had explained to her parent how Cyril had rescued her, saving her life at the risk of his own, with the assistance of his brave young companions, the hacendado, as Don Jose was called, was profuse in his thanks, not only to Cyril, whom he regarded with the warmest friendship, but to the other boys as well.

After the story of their thrilling adventures had been told, the entire party, with the horses of the bandits in charge, turned their faces up the valley and toward the Calderon hacienda.

They put up at a road side inn that night, and next day they reached Don Jose's home, to the great happiness of the distressed donna, Pepita's mother.

There was high jinks about the hacienda for the rest of that day and well into the evening.

It might be said that the American boys owned the place.

Don Jose and his wife couldn't do enough for them, while

the servitors took off their hats to them and bowed low with the greatest of respect every time they appeared.

"Well, if this don't bate the Dootch!" grinned Corney. "Faith, yez would think it was jukes we waz be the way thim people are fallin' over thimselves to do us proud. Ah, musha, it's a foine thing, so it is, to be distinguished, don't yez know."

"That's right," laughed Will. "We're cocks of the walk about here."

"Whisht! Don't say a wurrud! It's a foine mash I have on the senorita's maid. Sich eyes as she has! They go through me heart like a hot poker, so they do. I belave I'll roon off wid her whin we lave here, do yez moind."

"It's a pity you don't understand Spanish, Corney. Then you could make love to her in great shape."

"Don't yez worry about thot. We understand wan another to the quane's taste."

And while Will and Corney were having the time of their lives, Cyril and Pepita were enjoying themselves in their own way.

They were sitting in the central patio under the shade of a big pecan tree.

They seemed to be very happy, indeed, together.

"Pepita, I am soon going back to the United States—to my father's home on Staten Island, in the State of New York."

"No, no!" she cried, earnestly, nestling close to him. "You must not go. You must stay here with me. I should die if you left me."

"I'm afraid I can't stay, Pepita. I must return, for I have yet to go through college. But I will come back next summer—and every summer until I graduate. And then you will marry me, and come back North with me, and be my little wife forever more, will you not?"

"Your wife? Yes. I love you. The whole world is as nothing to me without you. You saved me from Senor Gonzales, whom I hated, and my very life I also owe to you. I am yours—yours forever."

And so it came about that Cyril, before they took their departure for home, had an interview with Don Jose, the subject of which was of the utmost importance both to himself and Pepita.

The result proved to be quite satisfactory to Cyril Young.

Don Jose was perfectly satisfied to accept the fine young American as his future son-in-law.

Cyril met with an equally happy reception from the donna.

A grand party was held at the hacienda to mark the formal betrothal of the two young people.

We are sorry to record, however, that Corney forgot himself on this occasion.

Between the bright eyes of Mercedes, Pepita's maid, and the hilarity of the afternoon and evening, Corney forgot that it was wine instead of water he was drinking, and the result was that a couple of sturdy Mexican peons had to be called into requisition to carry him off to bed.

The boys' bedroom was on the upper (second) floor, and opened onto the central court.

It was late when they awoke, and then Will began to joke Corney on the big head he got the night before.

All at once his eyes rested on a huge tarantula, a poisonous species of spider, which was making its way out of one of his shoes, which lay on the matting.

"Howly mother of Moses! What's thot?" he gasped, with staring eyes.

"What's what?"

"Why, thot thing," and Corney pointed in terror at the immense insect.

Will detected the tarantula at once, but instead of remarking its presence, he winked at Cyril and said:

"There's nothing there."

"Do yez mane to say there ain't any bug walkin' over thot mattin'?"

"Nary bug," grinned Will, while Cyril had to stuff the bed-clothes in his mouth to keep from laughing outright.

"Thin it's bewitched I am. Git a docther right away, for the love of hivin. I've got a faver or some other Mexican disease."

That settled it.

Cyril and Will roared, and then Corney discovered he was the butt of a joke.

"Faix, I'll git aven wid yez two for thot, so I will."

Then he grabbed up his trousers, shook them for fear of concealed centipedes, and then got into them as soon as he could.

A few days later the boys started for the City of Mexico en route for the United States.

Cyril and Pepita had a tearful parting, but they were young and the future full of golden hopes for them, which they expected some day to realize.

Some of the finest gems in the collection the boys had brought away from the mines of Montezuma, now lost, probably beyond all hope of recovery, were unanimously presented to Pepita before they left.

The rest, being worth all of three hundred thousand dollars, according to Don Jose, were carefully made up into parcels and consigned to Senor Luis Pacheco, an expert in the capital city, on the advice of the owner of the hacienda, to be disposed of at the best figures obtainable, as the young Americans would not have been able to carry the gems across the border without paying a high duty, which, of course, they were not in a position to do.

When they arrived home at Staten Island they found that Cyril's father, mother and sister had returned from their European trip.

As a matter of course, the boys had a long and thrilling story to tell, not the least interesting of which was concentrated about the lovely daughter of the noble Spaniard, Don Jose, of the Calderon hacienda.

Cyril, as a matter of course, kept his promise to return to Mexico during the following summer, and he was accompanied by Will and Corney as a select bodyguard.

Each summer while at Princeton he spent at the Calderon hacienda.

A few days after he graduated, quite a party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Young, Edith Young, Mr. George Adams, Cyril, Will and Corney, set out for Mexico, and were received at the hacienda with great honor.

The marriage of Cyril and Pepita, now lovely beyond all compare in her glorious ripening womanhood, took place in the Catholic Church of the Assumption, in the neighboring town, and the ceremony was performed by the bishop of the diocese.

They left for Vera Cruz, en route for Europe, next day, while the American party remained two weeks to enjoy the bountiful hospitality of the hacienda.

Corney, who called himself an Irish grandee, with his one hundred thousand dollars, married Mercedes, the maid of Senorita Calderon, and eventually took up his permanent residence in Mexico with Cyril and his young Spanish bride.

Will came to see them once in a while with his American wife, and those occasions were particularly happy ones for the boys whose Golden Risk had turned up trumps.

Next week's issue will contain "A SURE WINNER; OR, THE BOY WHO WENT OUT WITH A CIRCUS."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

Friends of Frank Wiroski, head of Erie detective force for the Huntington-Chicago division, says he bears a charmed life. After a thrilling revolver battle with car thieves, he found ten bullet holes in his clothing, but he escaped unhurt. Wiroski surprised ten men who were stripping an Erie freight car in the Griffith yards. He opened fire on them and in a running battle thirty shots were fired. The thieves escaped.

The new French 4-inch gun for attack on aircraft has proved to be a very efficient weapon. It fires a projectile weighing about 36 pounds with a muzzle velocity of 1,870 feet per second. The sighting is by means of a panoramic glass and the gun-pointing is done similarly to that of the well-known French 7.5 gun. The carriage remains fixed, the gun recoiling to a distance of one meter and returning to battery by means of compressed air. The weight of the piece in action with its armored screen is about two and one-third tons.

One of the most interesting parts of the cargo of the transport Thomas, which left San Francisco on Feb. 5, was thirty or forty tons of provisions for the German colony at Guam. The colony is composed largely of the officers and crew of German warships that are interned at Guam. As there is only a small colony of white people at Guam, it is imagined that the increase in its population by the enforced stay of the Germans has created a shortage of provisions. The Thomas is due to arrive at Guam on Feb. 26.

According to the last published figures of the Office of Naval Intelligence dated July 1st, 1914, when the new vessels which at that time were under construction, are completed and in commission, the United States navy will have dropped from third to fourth position in respect of total tonnage. The order will be Great Britain, 2,714,106 tons; Germany, 1,306,577 tons; France, 899,915 tons, and the United States, 894,889 tons. Since the war started, Great Britain, Germany and France have greatly accelerated construction, and probably the United States navy is further behind France in tonnage than the above figures indicate.

Pembroke Decatur Gwaltney, known throughout the country as "The Peanut King," and a millionaire, died at his palatial home at Smithfield, near Norfolk, Va. Returning from the civil war, Mr. Gwaltney saw the possibilities of developing the peanut business in this State, and was the pioneer in establishing great warehouses and securing the co-operation of the farmers in marketing the nut. Later he branched into the manufacture of peanut products and quickly made a fortune. He was the head of the Gwaltney Corporation and interested in all of the larger peanut factories in the State at the time of his retirement, two years ago.

If ever the disarmament of the world occurs there will be several countries that will not have much to do in that line, such as, for instance, Monaco, the army of which comprises 75 guards, 75 carbineers and 20 firemen, says Tit-Bits. Another diminutive army is that of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, which numbers 135 gendarmes, 170 volunteers and 30 musicians. The Republic of San Marino can put in the field a total of nine companies, consisting of 950 men and 38 officers, commanded by a marshal. The army on a peace footing consists of one company of 60 men. The fighting force of the "Black Republic" (Liberia) is composed of 700 men and almost as many officers. Liberia, however, evidently considers its army a formidable one, since, upon the occasion of hostilities between any of the powers, it always issues a proclamation of neutrality.

Sprint and endurance races will be on the programme of the spring roller skating carnival which will be held at Madison Square Garden, New York, on March 16, 17 and 18. As yet the management has not decided on whether it will conduct a twenty-four-hour race or adhere to the original plan of holding a fifty-hour team race. A mail vote of the starters in last year's race will be taken and the decision made later. It is practically assured that Jack Woodworth, Willie Blackburn, Arthur Launey, Frank Bacon, Freddie Martin, Roland Cioni, Billy Yale and the others who started in the twenty-four-hour grind last winter will compete in the spring event, no matter what the distance it. Besides these American stars, the management is trying to get hold of any European skaters who are not mixed up in the war. The entry list for the amateur races is open now with the Roller Skating Carnival Committee at Madison Square Garden.

When Edith, the three-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest E. Wehmeier, of Aurora, Ind., became seriously ill and cried for her papa, the mother, Mrs. Edith Schwab Wehmeier, notified her husband, from whom she had been separated, and a reconciliation took place beside the bed of the sick child. The Wehmeiers separated after a quarrel. Mrs. Wehmeier caused her husband's arrest on the charge of assault and battery, desertion and failure to provide, and then filed a petition for divorce. Wehmeier was fined \$50 and costs on the assault charge and was bound over to the Dearborn county circuit court on the wife and child desertion charge. While held in the county jail he professed religion and signed a pledge never to drink intoxicating liquors again and friends obtained his release on bond. When the cases against him were called he locked arms with his wife and went before Judge Warren N. Hauck, explained his troubles, and the judge consented to the motion of Willard E. Dean, prosecuting attorney, to dismiss the cases. After paying the costs in the divorce suit, Mr. and Mrs. Wehmeier left the courtroom together.

THE GOLDEN GROTTO

— OR —

TWO BOYS' SEARCH FOR NO-NO LAND

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER V (continued)

"Yes, yes! Let us go!" cried Edith, rising. "Dear papa. I wouldn't give him a moment's anxiety. He is so good."

"Come on, Morgan," said Jack. "We'll make a start."

"You don't mean to say that," growled the sailor, surily, "you actually give us leave to go on, boss?"

"What's the matter with Morgan, Frank?" asked Jack in a low tone.

"He and I had some words. I let him know that I intended to be master, and he did not like it."

"We shall have trouble with him."

"Not if we are firm. But, come, get into the canoe. Edith is right. We must go, or her father will be very much alarmed about her absence."

Morgan was very silent going up the river, and the merry talk of Edith and the two boys was not able to bring a smile to his lips. However, the three young people were too happy to trouble themselves in regard to him.

"Do you see those trees?" cried Edith, pointing to a thick clump about twenty feet high. "Well, just behind those trees is our camp. You will have to stay with us a few days at any rate."

Morgan glared at Edith as she made this remark.

"You don't frighten me with those angry looks, Mr. Morgan," laughed Edith. "I know what you mean, though. You think I am delaying your expedition. Well, what of it? The Golden Grotto won't run away."

"The Golden Grotto!" said Morgan, savagely. "What do you know about that?"

"I'd trouble you to address Miss Duncan in a different tone of voice," said Frank, sternly, with a fierce gleam in his eyes. "Miss Duncan knows what we told her. I am quite content to trust her with our secret, for I am sure that she will betray it to no one."

"I never knew a woman who could hold her tongue," retorted Morgan, "and I have been in the world many years more than either of you. I pity the person who betrays the secret," he added in a somewhat threatening way, "of which no one took any notice."

As the canoe was nearing the land, Edith stood up and cried out to her father.

The boys expected to see him come out from behind the trees to greet his daughter, but no one came, and there was no response to Edith's words.

"Probably they can't hear you," said Jack, "with the wind blowing like it is."

"Yes, that must be it," answered Edith, as Frank assisted her to land. She put her finger on her lips. "Not a word, boys. We will move as silently as possible, and give papa a great surprise. I will teach him not to wait breakfast for me."

Edith led the way, the boys having to move fast to keep pace with her, so lightly and quickly did she trip along. Morgan followed slowly, showing just as much eagerness to meet Mr. Duncan as he had to see the dead gorilla.

As they reached the trees, Edith put up her hand for silence, and then she drew aside the branches and looked through them.

"That ends your surprise, Edith," Jack laughed. "The camp is deserted. Your father has gone off to collect specimens."

"More likely to look for Edith," said Frank.

"Yes, yes; that must be it."

As she said this she and the boys ran toward the camp.

CHAPTER VI.

MORGAN QUARRELS WITH FRANK AND JACK.

Reaching the camp, they gazed around.

The sight that met their eyes was appalling.

On the ground lay two natives, covered with wounds, both of whom were quite dead. Everything was overturned and the whole camp was in confusion. The professor's cases in which he kept his specimens were lying around, broken to pieces and their contents destroyed. The ground was trampled down and everything denoted that a fierce struggle had taken place.

Edith turned pale, and then in a moment she burst into tears, crying:

"Oh, papa, papa, they have killed you!"

The grief distressed Frank and Jack beyond measure, and the more so because they were powerless to comfort her.

"Shiver me!" cried Morgan, "but there has been warm work here and no mistake. Those two fellows," he kicked one as he spoke, "have been carved up nicely. Say, this is mighty serious."

"Dreadful, isn't it, Morgan?" said Frank. "Looks as if that poor girl's father had been murdered."

"I wasn't thinking about him, Mr. Hardy. I am think-

ing about yours truly, Jim Morgan. Maybe it'll be his turn next."

"Do you think we are in danger?"

"Do I think? Yes, I do, and that's straight. The fellows who have performed this little job can't be far away and they may return at any moment. If they find us here, they won't do a thing to us. Let them make a meal off the professor. I am not fit for killing just yet."

"Hush! Hush!" cried Frank, horrified at the callous tone in which the man spoke. "Edith may hear you."

"Well, take my advice and get back to the boat as quick as you can."

"You won't desert me?" cried Edith, frantically.

"Desert you, Edith," said Frank. "What ever put such an idea as that into your head? No, no, no, we will protect you with our lives!"

"Very pretty sentiment," growled Morgan. "Very pretty."

"And you will save my father? Frank, Jack, you will rescue him, won't you?"

"Come, come," said Morgan. "You must let me have my say on this point. 'You must know, miss, those two young fellows and myself left Loango with a certain idea in our heads. As you've heard of it, I might as well say it right out. We started off to find a cave made of gold. Now, miss, we can't very well abandon you, though what we're to do with a woman in our party is just beyond me. You follow me?'"

"Yes, yes. I understand you."

"Now, I am out to find the Golden Grotto, and I am going to stick to the job."

"And you mean to abandon my father?"

"Very sorry, miss, but business is business, and it must be attended to. The same chaps who have the professor might chance to lay hands on us, too, and that wouldn't suit my book at all. That's the way to talk, boys, plain and straight, so that there can't be any mistake about it. Tell the young lady you are sorry for her, my lads, and then we will drop the subject."

"You are a cold-blooded wretch," said Frank Hardy, passionately. "You make me boil with rage to hear you talk. Edith, you can't think so badly of me as to think that this man has spoken my sentiments?"

"And he certainly hasn't expressed mine," said Jack. "It is true that we came out here to find treasure as Morgan says."

"I shall hold you to that," cried Morgan, excitedly. "You shall stick to the bargain."

"Circumstances alter cases, Morgan," said Jack, without showing any offense at his aggressive manner. Jack thought it advisable to avoid a quarrel, and thought it possible he might bring Morgan around to agree with himself and Frank.

"Yes," said Frank, continuing the argument from the point where Jack had stopped. "The events of to-day have changed everything, and consequently all our plans will have to be modified. The Golden Grotto can't run away, and no one is at all likely to find it. What difference will two or three days' delay make us?"

"None whatever," said Jack.

"It will make this difference," said Morgan; "we will be running into danger and risking our lives."

"Between now and the day we reach the Golden Grotto we shall have all kinds of danger to face," said Frank, "and a little bit more added won't amount to a row of pins."

"Well, I say it shan't be done," shouted Morgan, "and that is flat."

"And I say it shall be," answered Jack, quickly and firmly.

"You mean it?" demanded Morgan, rising as he spoke.

"Certainly I do."

"Very well. Then we won't say any more about it," and with these words Morgan walked away.

"I thought he would come to his senses," said Jack, "but he's just as obstinate as a mule. Of course, he had to fall in with our views, for he can't get along without us."

"I don't like Morgan," said Edith. "I think he is a very dangerous man and I wish you had nothing to do with him."

"Just what old Ben Burton of the Puritan used to say, Morgan's a rough diamond, Edith," said Jack, "but he's all right."

"At any rate, boys, I can never thank you enough for your firmness. Oh, do you think my father can be saved?"

"I will think of nothing else, Edith, until he is," said Frank. "Those men will not kill him, Edith. It is their custom to make slaves of any white people they capture, and although, no doubt, it is a cruel fate, still it is not death, and while he lives something may be done for him."

"We are wasting time," added Jack.

"We must consider what is best to be done," answered Frank. "In fact, I have been considering for some time, and I think I know what course we ought to adopt. You see those bushes? Well, they're battered down, so it is very plain the blacks went through these with their prisoners. That way is upstream and I propose that we get into the canoe and journey slowly upstream, keeping rather close in and watching for trails of the fugitives."

"And landing occasionally to have a look around."

"Yes, that is a good idea, Jack. Do you agree, Edith?"

"Yes, yes. Let us hurry. Quick, quick! I am dying to do something to help."

They hurried down to the water, and when they reached the bank of the river, to their utmost surprise, they saw the canoe out toward the middle of the stream. Morgan stood up and waved his hand mockingly at them.

"We must make Morgan come back!" cried Frank.

"But how can we?"

"With this."

Frank pointed his rifle as he spoke and immediately put it to his shoulder.

"I am not going to kill him," he said, "but I will give him a scare and perhaps that will make him come back."

Frank aimed well over the canoe in which Jim Morgan was, and as he fired he could see Morgan leaning forward toward the crew, evidently urging them to hurry.

"Get behind the tree, Edith!" shouted Jack. "Quick, quick!"

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

GARBAGE COLLECTING MOTOR WAGONS.

Recent information about the municipal household waste collecting vans which are used successfully at Paris, states that these vehicles have a capacity of 360 cubic feet in the large box body, and in spite of this large stowage, the top of the box body is only 5 feet from the ground, so that loading in material is done with great facility. The box or garbage holder is of soft steel plate and on the top is a set of arched sliding covers. When at the garbage consuming plant, the whole body can be lifted off the truck for dumping purposes. A "Fram" electric front truck drives the car.

FIVE-CENT POSTAGE TO GERMANY.

Postmaster Morgan called attention recently to the effect of the war on the postage rates charged for letters to Germany. Following the establishment of the two-cent rate between this country and England, Germany also set up a two-cent rate. But this was only on letters traveling by steamers proceeding direct from this country to Germany.

Until direct service is resumed, letters for Germany must pay the regular postal union rate of 5 cents for the first ounce or fraction thereof. However, letters which are not sufficiently prepaid will be permitted to go forward, but when delivered will be chargeable with double the amount of the deficiency in postage.

AT 48 HE BECOMES LAWYER.

An ambition to be a lawyer that has possessed John J. Morse, of St. Louis, since boyhood, was gratified recently when he was admitted to the bar. He was presented in Judge Grimm's court by Loomis C. Johnson. Mr. Morse is forty-eight years old and married. He was connected with the St. Louis Car Wheel Company for eighteen years, the last five of which he was general manager, later becoming secretary and manager of the Southern Wheel Company. Since his early boyhood he says he had had a desire to be a lawyer. He studied at the Benton Law School, and passed the State bar examination after eleven months' preparation. The course generally is three years. Mr. Morse will be associated with John D. and Loomis C. Johnson in the National Bank of Commerce.

PAID A GHOST'S DEBTS.

An amazing story of an old woman's superstition came before Judge Drummond at Balieborough, County Cavan, in the course of an action brought by Miss Anne Brady against a local farmer named Connell.

The plaintiff said that in June last the defendant told her that the ghost of her brother Phil, who had been dead twenty-six years, was haunting him because he forgot to pay defendant 70 shillings he owed him. The witness was frightened and paid the money, which the defendant swore on "the poker and tongs" was due. The defendant said he, after Phil died, walked nine miles to the wake

to see if he could get an opportunity of mentioning the debt, but he was not given a chance. He denied having said anything whatever about Phil's ghost. His honor, in giving judgment, said he firmly believed the story.

PLOWING BY ELECTRICITY CHEAPER THAN HORSES.

From experiments which have been conducted of late near Florence, Italy, it is reported to have been demonstrated conclusively that electric plowing has a direct advantage over all other mechanical methods of tilling the soil, says Popular Mechanics. The small initial cost of the needed equipment, the low maintenance charge, and the efficiency derived from the energy consumed are cited as the points contributing to the success of the process. The work is done by a stationary apparatus consisting chiefly of a motor-driven capstan and hauling cable. The running arrangement is composed of a truck hauling disk plows, which cut to a depth of between 18 and 20 inches, and which will plow approximately 89 acres before it is necessary to change the position of the stationary plant. The cost of the work, with the power rate set at about 5 cents a kilowatt hour, was estimated to be about one-half that of plowing the same area with horses, and two-thirds the expense of steam plowing.

ADVERTISING FOR A WIFE.

George Bodenhamer, widower, and one of the largest hog buyers, raisers and shippers in Baxter County, Ark., made an advertising contract with a local newspaper, in which he agreed to give the editor a prime fat, 200-pound hog next fall, if, through the advertising columns of the paper the editor secured for him a wife by that time. The editor, believing in the pulling power of his advertising columns, accepted the offer on the spot. Mr. Bodenhamer's specifications are very liberal. The requirements are that the wife must be under forty, healthy, a good cook and housekeeper, with a sentimental and lovable disposition. He will not object to a little temper, but does not want and will not have a spitfire, or one who has a nagging disposition. What he wants is a good woman who will make a pleasant and congenial home. If she has a little money to put into the hog business it will be acceptable, but it is not necessary. Mr. Bodenhamer owns a good 160-acre farm near this place that is well stocked with hogs. He also has cows, horses, etc. He has seven children, the oldest seventeen years and the youngest six years. On his side he agrees to keep plenty of rump steak and other provisions in the pantry and to maintain the home. He is not prejudiced against widows. He is not bad-looking, is forty years old, healthy, sober and a man of good morals and reputation. He gives as his reason for advertising for a wife that he is too busy to run around the country looking one up and going through a prolonged courtship. He is using advertising space as a short cut.

Two Yankee Boys in Cuba

— OR —

FIGHTING WITH THE PATRIOTS

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XII (continued)

"An excellent plan, as the black man yet lives," said the other guard.

Quick to seize this opportunity of escaping, the boys ran from the house, secured their horses and galloped away.

Nor did they pause until the town was many miles behind them, and the danger of capture gone.

When they finally slackened speed, Dick drew a deep breath, burst out laughing, and cried:

"Ned, we are free once more."

"Thank heaven for that," fervently said the other.

"Whew! How cleverly we squeezed out of that scrape!"

"Faith, I can hardly realize it yet."

"Well, that detective was a clever rascal."

"He's taught us not to be after trusting every black-guard we pick up on the high road, my lad."

"We can get something to eat here, perhaps."

He pointed at an old tavern.

They were accommodated there.

Having supplied themselves with some rations, and filled their canteens with water, the boys prepared to go.

"Amigos," said the hostler, "are you going by the main road?"

"Yes—that is, close to it," replied Dick, who was thinking of the trail of the patriots they were pursuing.

"Have you got passports or certificates of citizenship?"

"No—we have not."

"Then I advise you not to go ahead."

"Why so?" asked Ned, in some surprise.

"Because less than a league away José Martí has a camp, around which he has thrown out pickets. If you meet them and are ignorant of the password, you'll get shot."

"Oh," said Dick with a smile, "I see."

"Moreover, a troop of Spanish guerrillas are chasing them. Should you meet them, the same fate awaits you."

"I'm glad you mentioned it. Here's a doubloon for the news. And now, perhaps, you can give us some information about these Spaniards?"

"Many thanks—the American gentlemen are generous. Mercy—a doubloon! If you take my advice you can get past the Spaniards very easily, senors."

"Explain how."

"Ride down in the valley to yonder cocoas and go to the left of them. If you wish to avoid the insurgents, too, keep going to the left of the trees."

"I see," said Dick, with a nod.

And the two boys cantered away down the slope.

When they were descending the declivity they plainly saw the smoke rising from several camp fires.

"That groom was a Cuban boy," said Ned. "Did you notice how he pronounced his 'v' and 's' in speaking?"

"Yes. That's the easiest way to distinguish—a Cuban pronounces 'v' as if it were 'b,' and 's' broad, while a Spaniard rather lisps it. We'll have to beware of those guerrillas, as they may see our approach."

"Dick, I see the rebel camp."

"Whereabouts? I can't make it out."

"Cast your glance to the right of the trees—see the tents?"

"Oh, yes. They're almost hidden in that hollow."

"In ten minutes we ought to be after reaching it."

They went ahead at a lively gait for a few moments and Dick stooped over to drive the mosquitoes from his horse's neck when the crack of a rifle was heard, followed by the hum of a bullet.

It flew over Dick's body.

Had he not stooped it would have hit him.

Straightening up suddenly, he glanced around.

He observed the gleaming barrels of several rifles protruding over the tops of some limestone rock a short distance away and the heads of several soldiers behind them.

"Go, Ned; go!" he cried.

And digging spurs into the flanks of their horses, away they sped, and a volley of shots followed them.

The bullets buzzed around the boys like a swarm of bees, and both horses were slightly wounded.

Bending far over on that side of their steeds furthest removed from their enemies, the boys were partially protected, and finally got out of range of their enemies' rifles.

The Spaniards pursued them on horseback presently, and a hot race ensued.

But the boys headed for the picket lines of the Cubans, and it was not long before several rebels sprang from the bushes before the horses.

Leveling their rifles, they yelled for the password:

"*Quien vive?*"

"*Cuba libre,*" replied Dick.

"Advance slowly."

"Fire on those Spaniards chasing us."

A rattling volley halted and drove the Spanish guerrillas back, and the two boys lightly dismounted.

"Conduct us to José Martí at once," said Dick.

"Impossible, senor—he left us yesterday."

"Good heavens—where is he?"

"Gone back to Santiago. Antonio Maceo sent for him."

"No, no! It is some plot—some vile trap!"

"You alarm me!"

"Who is in command?"

"Aguero."

"Conduct me to the general."

The picket obeyed.

In ten minutes they reached Aguero's tent.

Dick briefly explained all that happened.

"By heavens," said Aguero, "the papers Maceo sent by you to Marti have fallen into the hands of our enemies. The order for Marti to go to St. Jago must have been bogus."

"I fear so," said Dick, sadly.

"Hark! The pounding of horse's hoofs coming this way!"

An orderly stepped in and saluted.

"A courier from Santiago, senor," said he.

The agitated general and the two troubled boys stepped outside.

A horseman was dashing furiously toward the tent.

Reining in before them so suddenly as to throw his horse upon his haunches, he cried in hoarse tones:

"I have come to report bad news, general."

"Out with it! Do not keep me in suspense!"

"José Marti has been killed at St. Jago."

"Killed!" gasped Dick, turning pale.

"Yes. A detachment of Spaniards attacked a number of the rebels who were only armed with machetes. It was an awful fight. Marti was lured into it by treachery. But he fought like a hero. The hope was forlorn. Riddled with bullets he fell. '*Cuba libre!*' he cried, as he died. We tried to recover his body. But the Spaniards got it."

CHAPTER XIII.

IN A CIRCLE OF RIFLES.

The news of the courier sent a thrill of the most intense dismay through his auditors.

For a moment there ensued a deep silence, which was only broken by the stifled sobs of General Aguero.

"Poor Marti! Poor Marti!" he exclaimed brokenly.

"It is the fortune of war, senor," said Dick, quietly.

"Ah, I loved him as a brother."

"I fear we are responsible for his death."

"You? Impossible!"

"Just think—the papers intrusted to us were taken——"

"No one can blame you for their loss under the circumstances. You did your duty nobly."

"It's my opinion," said Ned, "that as soon as the blamed Spaniards got the papers, they laid a plot to capture or kill Marti. They began shrewdly by sending for him with a forged order. This they were enabled to do, as they had the papers we were carrying, and got here while we were detained along the trail."

"Have you any knowledge of what Maceo's papers said?"

"Very little. He merely told us that their loss might cause the exposure of a gigantic Cuban plot and cost Marti's life."

They discussed the matter at some length.

Finally the boys were assigned to good quarters.

They marched at night with the patriots, and slept during the day, until finally they drew near Manzanillo.

Here the volunteers' arms and ammunition were taken, and the whole party prepared to return to Santiago.

Over a week had passed by.

Scouts came into camp at intervals with reports of having seen many wandering bands of the Spaniards.

Dick had seen Fanita.

She was in safe quarters.

But her brother Mario was not found.

He had gone away as soon as he put his sister in a place of safety.

It was Gen. Aguero's design to get the troops and implements of war back to the neighborhood of Santiago.

They therefore set out under cover of the night along the coast side of the mountains, and the general said to his men:

"We must now avenge the murder of poor Marti."

Fierce expressions emanated from all the men.

"We can strike a good blow for Cuba's freedom," went on the general, "and at the same time we can increase our chances of gaining an important city. Once we can gain the recognition of a foreign power as belligerents, we will have no restraint hampering our receipt of arms from other countries."

"It's a pity," said Dick, as the two boys rode on each side of Aguero, at the head of the column, "that the Cubans do not manufacture implements, but have to depend on the products of other countries."

"That's a fact," assented the general. "It forces us to depend for our supply upon other nations. It is against their laws to permit the shipment of arms to men who are not recognized as sustaining a government. That is why we have to form filibustering expeditions to smuggle the things from the United States now."

"Faith, it's the Yankees' pity the Cubans have," said Ned.

"Don't you realize why?" quickly asked Aguero. "I'll tell you. It is because the Cuban case is exactly the same as was the American case. Read the Declaration of Independence and you will realize this. The Spaniards oppress the Cubans just as the English oppressed the American colonists. We want our freedom, and are fighting for it, as your ancestors did in George Washington's time."

Dick pondered a moment.

He was struck by the similarity the Cuban revolution bore to the American revolution.

In the American case the colonists had money, arms, men, and the aid of others; in the Cuban case, the patriots had but little money, arms or aid, and were placed at the disadvantage of being persecuted by foreign powers from whom they wished to purchase the means of war.

"By thunder!" said Dick, "it's an outrage for the Cubans to be ignored and harassed by other nations!"

(To be continued)

TIMELY TOPICS

A gander on the farm of Ollie McKinney, in Saw Mill Valley, Patton Township, Pa., is attracting much interest because of a peculiar growth, resembling a horn, on its head, about an inch above its eyes. The gander is about one year old. In two weeks from the time McKinney noticed the growth the "horn" grew one and one-half inches.

Letting out his prisoners to work for wages that go to their families instead of making them hammer stones, C. S. Whipple, Rock County sheriff, is demonstrating the possibilities of the Wisconsin commitment law. During the two years the statute has been in force \$16,775.85 has been earned by prisoners in this county. Of this amount dependents of paroled persons received \$10,376.81 and the county \$1,210.41. One man was paroled for a year to his wife to conduct a clothes pressing establishment.

Joseph Celi was sentenced to wash dishes for his wife for fourteen months by Judge Howard Weist in the Circuit Court, Flint, Mich. Celi pleaded guilty to a violation of the local option law. He told the court that he had been unable to get work for fourteen months. The court then asked his wife if he did any work about the house. She said that he carried the water and coal, but that he never helped her to wash the dishes. Celi was allowed his liberty on probation and must wash the dishes.

Carl Veeck, of Petersburg, Ind., owns a duck that serves as a watchdog. The duck was hatched with four legs, and soon became a great curiosity. Whenever strangers visited in the neighborhood of the Veeck home they always called to see the duck. The duck became so sensitive that whenever it heard any one coming it would run and hide. Despite its efforts to escape it was always caught. Then it changed its tactics and whenever any one approached it would begin quacking as loud as it could. Now, whenever any one passes or tries to enter the back yard at night the duck can be heard squawking all over the neighborhood. Veeck has refused all offers to buy the duck.

One fox was captured and six escaped in the annual fox drive in Northern Tippecanoe County, Ind., recently. More than 500 men and boys took part in the round-up. They all carried noise-making devices, but clubs, dogs and guns were barred. An immense circle was formed, covering an area nearly fifteen square miles in extent. All made for a given point in the center. Despite the vigilant work half a dozen foxes inside the circle managed to get through the line. At the round-up on the William Ross farm several boys finally ran the lone remaining fox down and captured it. An auction sale was held and \$50 was derived for charity. The women of the Pleasant Grove Church served lunch to the crowd. Farmers in the vicinity of the fox drive have been losing poultry for several weeks due to visits of the hungry foxes.

Postmaster Morgan announced the extent of the reduction of the force of the New York postoffice, which he had been forced to make on account of the unsettled business conditions created by the war and the resultant decrease in revenue. He will not dismiss any one, but he will transfer to the substitute roll and temporary list seventy-nine of the regular carriers. Transfers will be made in the case of the last seventy-nine appointed, and the postmaster is confident that they will be restored to the regular list within a year. Meanwhile they will substitute for absent regular carriers. Mr. Morgan believes that the efficiency of the collection and delivery services will not be impaired, as recent changes in the business and residential sections make it possible to rearrange schedules so as to reduce the number of men without injury to the public.

Alkali Ike, deputy sheriff from the desert, was a visitor in San Diego, Cal. Alkali was looking for the white lights. By noon, having failed to discover the excitement his soul craved, he made his way into the U. S. Grant Hotel buffet and, pulling a "forty-five" that looked like one of the Kaiser's howitzers, announced that he was going to do some "cleaning." As he swung his "Krupp" around the room heads dropped behind partitions, many faces paled at visions of sudden death. Commander-in-Chief Billie Schuler tipped his cigar to a higher angle than usual and, backed by Irish and Germans, advanced on "the bad man from the sandhills." For an instant visions of carnage flashed before the eyes of the men who had sought refuge, but it quickly passed, for Schuler annexed the cannon and threw Alkali Ike to the sidewalk. Half an hour later the fire-eater was back, begging with tears streaming down his face for his weapon. "I'll be on my way to the sandhills in five minutes," he promised as he got back his gun.

The chairman of the Liverpool Underwriters' Association, in his speech at the annual meeting, said that owing to the effective work of the British fleet the losses in the war thus far to British shipping had been much less than might have been expected. After six months of war, he said, the loss to the British mercantile fleet was estimated at \$30,000,000 to \$35,000,000. It had been estimated that the losses would be \$90,000,000 in the first six months. The chairman said that the year 1915 had opened badly, with a large number of very costly losses, the figures on the books of the association showing a total of \$6,500,000 as compared with \$3,500,000 for the corresponding period of last year. The insurance of hulls on time charters was in an unsatisfactory state, and, owing to the higher cost of labor and materials, which made a large percentage of premiums disappear in claims, concerted action had been taken to raise rates moderately. Referring to war risks, he said this part of the insurance business had brought very satisfactory profits to the underwriters.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, MARCH 12, 1915.

TERMS TO SUBSCRIBERS

Single Copies.....	.05 Cents
One Copy Three Months.....	.65 Cents
One Copy Six Months.....	1.25
One Copy One Year.....	2.50

Postage Free

HOW TO SEND MONEY—At our risk send P. O. Money Order, Check or Registered Letter; remittances in any other way are at your risk. We accept Postage Stamps the same as cash. When sending silver wrap the coin in a separate piece of paper to avoid cutting the envelope. Write your name and address plainly. Address letters to

HARRY E. WOLFF, President
ROY L. MCCARDLE, Vice-President
N. HASTINGS WOLFF, Treasurer
CHARLES E. NYLANDER, Secretary

Frank Tousey, Publisher
168 West 23d St., N. Y.

GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Nearly all the moleskins used for making the fur garments that are now so fashionable are imported from Europe. But the Scientific American remarks that American farmers may turn the pest of moles into a source of profit, as the United States supply a skin actually superior to that of the foreign animal.

Electricity is being employed with success at a Detroit coke oven for the purpose of removing tar from artificial gas in the purifying process. The gas is passed through a highly-ionized field, which is produced by a high-tension discharge of current ranging as high as 80,000 volts, with the result that the tar forms in large drops, which are then easily separated.

Margaret Allison, aged eight, is one of the youngest printers in Nashville, Ind. Each evening, on her way home from school, she stops at the Democrat office, where she makes from 50 to 75 cents setting type at 20 cents a thousand. One galley of the type she set by hand in three hours. Mr. Allison, father of Margaret, is one of the fastest compositors in this part of the State.

E. H. Carter, of Wahpeton, N. Dak., has an old relic of bygone days in a Bible, published in Windsor, Vt., in 1812, by Merrifield & Cochran, at "The Sign of the Bible." This book is 103 years old. It was the property of a great uncle of Mr. Carter, who evidently had made an exhaustive study of the Bible, as was evidenced by the copious marginal notes and references in old-fashioned handwriting.

The latest novelty in the line of a receipt for goods was "sprung" on L. A. Beaudreau, No. 160 West Cotton street, Fond du Lac, Wis. A short time ago Mr. Beaudreau missed five members of his feathered family from the coop in his back yard, and all efforts to find the thief were vain. The latter, however, apparently had a sense of etiquette, for, upon opening his front door a few mornings later, the owner found a package containing the legs of the missing chickens, evidently a card of appreciation of the excellent meals lately served at the table of the night prowler.

Two light tenders at Point San Lucas, the southerly end of Lower California, were saved from death by startation recently by L. C. Hansen, first officer of the Pacific Mail steamer Newport. Hansen said he would take a line ashore. He rode breaker after breaker on a surfboard until he finally was cast up exhausted on the shore. Hansen was unable to move for several minutes and the two lighthouse men were too weak from lack of food to haul on the line that Hansen brought them. After a rest Hansen was able to heave in the line, which brought a double line from the boat, and to this was attached a series of life-buoys with the food made fast to them in water-tight cans.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"And do you expect to follow in the footsteps of your father when you grow up?" asked the good man. "Naw," replied Tommy, "me fader is de legless wonder in de museum."

M. Crapaud—Ah! So zis ees your leetle son? He look to be similaire to you. Popley—Yes, he's very much like me. M. Crapaud—Ah! How do you call eet? "A cheep of ze old blockhead," ees eet not?

Jottery Jim—Wot's the good of cacklin' like a old woman? Why don't yer call a spade a spade and—Weary Williams—Wot? Not me. I've never been near enough to a spade to call it anythin', and don't mean to.

"Miss Ethel," he began, "or Ethel I mean—I've known you long enough to drop the 'Miss,' haven't I?" She fixed her lovely eyes upon him with a meaning gaze. "Yes, I think you have," she said. "What prefix do you wish to substitute?"

At a political meeting an excited Irishman rose to express his satisfaction. "Sit down!" called the man behind him, pulling at his coat-tails. "Don't you know you're opaque?" "And that I'm not!" cried the other. "I'm O'Brien!"

Robert was in the kitchen hammering away: "carpentering," he called it, and making a great deal of noise. When suddenly the noise ceased, mamma called out to him: "What's the matter, Robby?" "I hit the wrong nail," sobbed a stifled little voice.

Proud Mother—You will be five years old to-morrow, Willie, and I want to give you a real birthday treat. Tell me what you would like better than anything else? Willie—Bring me a whole box of chocolate creams, mother, and ask Tommy Smith to come in and watch me eat them.

Sammy was not prone to overexertion in the classroom; therefore his mother was both surprised and delighted when he came home one noon with the announcement, "I got 100 this morning." "That's lovely, Sammy!" exclaimed his proud mother, and she kissed him tenderly. "What was it in?" "Fifty in reading and fifty in 'rithmetic."

THE BLUE DRAGON.

By Paul Braddon

Eleven centuries ago, where the city of Kamakura now stands, was a great lake, and down at the bottom of this lake lived a blue dragon, with emerald green eyes and a fiery mouth, who frightened the people to heart-sickness, because he lived on the flesh of little babies. He stole them whenever he could find them, cracked their bones, picked them clean, drank their blood and threw the dismembered skeletons on the shore of the lake, where weeping mothers in vain begged him to drown them also that they might forget their lost darlings' untimely fate.

Now, down by the lake lived Yoroti, a very rich man, who had sixteen children. He thought that even a dragon must respect so wealthy a person; and his wife could not persuade him to remove from the lakeside.

"He gobbles up the peasants' babies, this ugly dragon," he used to say, "but he will not touch the offspring of a man of high position."

The event proved that he was wrong. One day he returned home to hear his wife wailing, and his servants beating their hands together. The blue dragon had killed and eaten all his little ones, and their bones strewed the shore of the lake. Completely crushed by this calamity, all his pride was gone. He gathered up the remains of his little ones and carried them away to a miserable desert place, covered with sand and unsheltered by a single tree. Here he buried them, and the peasants called the spot the Rich Man's Burying Place. There he spent his time bewailing his loss; and he began to feel sorry for the peasants, whom heretofore he had despised, believing them to be clods, to whom such things happened because they did not feel them as more delicately-bred persons would.

One day, while he was weeping and watering with his tears the sixteen cactus plants in the mounds beneath which he had laid the ashes of his children's bones, he heard a strange cry, and, looking upward, saw a cormorant hovering over him that said:

"Rich man—rich man, are you sorry for the peasants now?"

And Yoroti bowed his head, and answered:

"Yes, I am sorry now."

Then the cormorant spoke again, and said:

"Rich man, would you save these peasant children if you could?"

And Yoroti answered:

"Yes—yes; I would save them if I could."

Then suddenly the cormorant changed into a beautiful winged woman and stood before him, and a strange light shone around her, and he fell on his face, afraid in her presence.

But she spoke to him kindly.

"Rich man," she said, "arise. If you would save the peasants' children, you can. Your wealth is great, and the blue dragon loves gold and jewels. Return to the lakeside, dwell there with your wife, and on that day of the week on which the blue dragon comes for a child, go to him and offer in its stead a handful of gold or a jewel.

Do this each week until all is gone, and so prove your devotion to your fellow-sufferers. Meanwhile, for every tear of grief you save another I will shed one of gratitude to water the plants that grow over your children's graves."

Yoroti listened and obeyed. He kissed the pale-green plants, and departed for his home.

His wife and servants were overjoyed to see him. When they heard his purpose, they marveled, but no one attempted to interfere. They told him that the dragon had grown so bold that he entered homes and took a child from its mother's arms, and they saw him depart for the shore, on the first morning, with great terror, for no one could tell when this dragon might begin to eat men.

Yoroti stood at the lakeside while the villagers watched him from afar, and his wife beat her hands together in terror; and the blue head of the dragon was lifted above the water, and the emerald eyes were fixed upon him. Then he spoke.

"Blue dragon, I come to speak to thee."

And the blue dragon answered:

"What do you wish?"

"I am a rich man, whose sixteen children thou hast eaten," said the rich man, "and I am come to offer thee a handful of gold for every child thou wilt spare. When the gold is gone I have jewels, emeralds, rubies, diamonds, pearls. Thou shalt have them all."

The dragon listened and consented.

"But remember," he said, "when I come to land I shall snort aloud three times. If the third time passes, and thou comest not, I shall take a child."

Yoroti agreed to this, but he knew the dragon's art, and that he hoped in this way to get gold and child-flesh too.

And now began a life of watching and fatigue. The dragon now came to the surface at least five times oftener than before. Even when he slept Yoroti always desired his wife to watch, and on the first snort of the dragon to awaken him; and he wore the fee the monster required for each child over his heart that there need be no delay.

That awful sound, as though the caves where evil beings dwelt were burst open, aroused all the dwellers by the lake. They clasped their children to their hearts and trembled, but at the second cry they always saw Yoroti, the rich man, running from his home to the shore, and the blue dragon retired appeased to his lake again. And so it continued until all the money and jewels that Yoroti had possessed were gone but one great emerald. He could save one more child; no more.

The peasants by this time adored him. The priests prayed for him. His fame had spread far and wide. But, alas! his power would soon end. All were in despair. He stood on the shore, with the jewel in his palm, and he besought the dragon to take it and to leave the peasants henceforth in peace. The dragon only laughed.

"When I have snorted thrice, if I have not my fee, I will have a child," he said, and retreated to the lake.

The emerald caught the last glow of the setting sun as he sank beneath the water; and all was despair beside the Lake of the Dragon. On the other side of the lake was a mountain. Upon its hither side Yoroti went to bewail himself. And he prayed aloud, crying:

"Let me be taught how to save my poor peasants from the grief I have known."

And he heard a cry, and saw the cormorant hovering over the lake.

"Push the mountain into the lake," were the words it uttered.

"I cannot move the mountain," said Yoroti, sadly.

"Believe that you can and see," said the cormorant.

And Yoroti had faith, and extended his arms and pressed against the mountainside and cried:

"Drop into the lake, oh! mountain, and crush the dragon."

And the mountain moved slowly, and all saw it; and instantly it vanished into the lake. The water splashed all about, drenching every one, and they fled; but when they recovered from their amazement, behold, the lake was filled up, and the dragon buried beneath the mountain forevermore; and a beautiful figure in white, with wings, stood by Yoroti's side, and said:

"Go, now, and take thy wife to the place they call the Rich Man's Burying Place, and see how I have watched thy plants."

Yoroti obeyed. Together the two sought the desert spot, and found that a little garden had sprung up there. Sixteen cactus plants, each bearing a great red flower, waved and nodded their heads toward them, and as they advanced the flowers burst open, and from each sprang the figure of a child—their own little children, as well and beautiful as ever, each bearing in the shawl it wore pearls and diamonds beyond price, and gold enough to make Yoroti a rich man again.

Then he returned to his people and was forever beloved by them and always happy. The blue dragon was never heard of again, and Kamakura was built upon the spot where the dragon's lake had been.

THE MANIAC SKIPPER.

The ship *Eden*, of five hundred tons, cleared from London on the 15th day of October for the port of Valparaiso. She was well found in all respects, had an ample crew and good officers, and was rated high in point of insurance.

But as to the cargo of the *Eden*, perhaps the least said the better. It was certainly not what one was about to cross the ocean in her would choose, as her manifest showed that she had over one hundred and fifty tons of gunpowder in her hold.

The *Eden* got out to sea and lay her course under the most favorable circumstances, and for the first twenty days had promise of a prosperous voyage. There was a drawback, to be sure, in the somewhat variable temper of the captain, who had a passion for sending the whole watch aloft, though there was nothing to be done, and then piping up the watch below to take their place on deck.

Three weeks having transpired, the eccentricities of the captain seemed to increase. He grew terribly profane, and would swear at the men without the least cause, until he foamed at the mouth, knocking them down with handspikes, and resorting to every species of violence.

About a month after leaving port all hands were aroused to an exciting and tragic scene. Hastily summoned on deck by the frantic cries of the watch, the now thoroughly alarmed crew gathered around the captain's skylight to witness a sight calculated to fill them with horror.

The captain had set his cabin on fire, and in the midst of the flames and smoke could be dimly discerned, dancing about madly, firing his revolvers and uttering shouts of demoniac glee. The man was raving mad.

A situation more desperate could not be invented by the most fruitful imagination.

There was a full crew in midocean, on a ship loaded with gunpowder, already in flames, and in command of a maniac, armed to the teeth.

The second mate and the carpenter were ordered to break in the cabin door and secure the lunatic. But they were received with a perfect volley of shots, wounding the mate and driving back the carpenter.

Whatever was done must be done quickly, or all would be sent heavenward together.

Now came another frightful discovery. It appeared that the captain, with diabolical cunning, had prepared for this great bonfire by first saturating the various parts of the ship with paraffin oil.

This discovery was the climax. All were at once disheartened—the vessel could not be saved.

The mate ordered the boatswain to pipe all hands to the boats, and he determined to quit the ship.

As they were lowering the first boat, the lunatic captain appeared upon the deck.

He had a bayonet in one hand, and a pistol in the other, and charged upon the men who were lowering away the boat. Two men fell, seriously wounded, by his hands, then the mate, following close upon the captain, knocked him down with a handspike, and disarmed him.

The boats were then lowered, and a few provisions and a cask of water put into them.

"Bear a hand, men, or we shall all be blown up," said the mate.

Everything was done as quickly as possible.

The captain utterly refused to go into the boat.

"Tie him hands and feet," said the mate.

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded the men.

He was quickly bound and laid in the bottom of one of the boats.

"Shove off, men, and pull for your lives," said the mate.

The men gave way with a will, straining every nerve to pull away from the ship.

"Pull, I say; pull for your lives!" shouted the mate.

Ha! the powder at last!

The boats seemed to be lifted far out of the sea, and for a moment every one was blinded by the spray and smoke.

The good ship *Eden* had disappeared.

Fortunately, after floating about all that night, they were discovered and picked up the next day by an English vessel, but their crazy captain was necessarily put in irons.

Four days subsequently he managed to creep upon deck, and, springing from the taffrail, he sank to rise no more.

NEWS OF THE DAY

Atchison, Kan., has two men, both past eighty years of age, who never wear spectacles when they read. They are J. C. Scheibe, aged eighty-eight, and William Armstrong, Sr., eighty-two years old. Both men are among Kansas's earliest pioneers now living and are remarkably active for their age.

The Panama Canal has been open for public use six months. The total of the tolls collected since the opening has been a trifle more than \$2,000,000 to date. In January ninety-eight vessels passed through the canal, forty-four going west and fifty-four going east. Altogether they carried cargoes aggregating 500,000 tons.

To make the monster cheese that New York State will exhibit at the Panama-Pacific Exposition took a whole day's supply of milk for twenty-five cheese factories—106,000 pounds in all. The cheese is more than six feet in diameter, nearly five feet high and weighs between five and six tons. The mould in which it was made was built up of galvanized iron hoops.

Telephonic communication between Philadelphia and San Francisco was inaugurated Feb. 11 over the Bell system by three taps of the Liberty Bell, the sound of which over the wire was the signal to a bugler in the far Western city to play "The Star Spangled Banner." The strains of the national anthem were distinctly and clearly heard by two hundred persons who held receivers to their ears in this city.

Members of the German Alliance, in Evansville, Ind., are selling iron rings at \$1 each for the benefit of the widows and orphans caused by the war in Germany. In Chicago more than 22,000 of these rings were sold at \$2 each. The selling of the rings is a custom handed down from the days of Napoleon the First. Then the wealthy women of Germany sold their gold and jewelry to swell the war fund. They bought iron rings instead.

John Bignose, an Indian living on the reserve, Tower, Minn., is the champion wolf hunter of this district. He captured a half dozen of the brutes. The forest is full of wolf tracks, but the animals are wary, and to attempt to capture them is to pit one's self against their superior cunning. Poison fails to work, and a set trap is about the only means of taking them. The recent restoration of the bounty to \$7.50 by the commissioners, supplemented by \$7.50 from the State, together with about \$5 for the fur, makes the capture of a wolf a sufficient incentive to wage a warfare on these forest robbers.

When George Wachtel, a mechanic, of West Hoboken, N. J., went to work the other morning he left his wife worrying because she had an appointment with a dentist.

When he returned late in the afternoon he found her on the floor of the living-room, a bullet-hole in her forehead and a deep slash in her right wrist. A small rifle and a carving knife were nearby. After Dr. Philip Erivitz had attended her, Mrs. Wachtel was taken to the North Hudson Hospital, where it was said she could not live. She is thirty years old. Wachtel told the police that his wife had several teeth extracted recently and that more were to have been extracted. He said that she had complained of the pain and had said she didn't see how she could bear to go to a dentist again. The police recorded the case as attempted suicide.

The discovery has just been made in the central portion of the French Congo of a race of pygmies hitherto totally unknown. The members of the race are said never to surpass 1.5 meters, about 4 feet 9 inches, in height. According to La Revue, they live entirely isolated in the territory of Mongimbo. They build huts of hemispherical shape in the forest in groups of from 5 to 30. The chief is an old man who exercises absolute and hereditary authority and elects his own successor. They follow a curious custom as to food, the women subsisting on edible roots, while the men live on the products of the chase. According to a legend among them, the former are descended from a hedgehog and the latter from a toad. They have vague notions of good and evil and have a certain cult of the dead, whom they inter with much piety. They are valiant in the defense of their liberty and independence.

The smallest boy scout in the world lives at Blue Springs, Mo., just a little way from Kansas City. His name is Arthur Portwood. He is exactly twenty-nine inches high and weighs thirty-five pounds. Arthur is fourteen years old and in the sixth grade in school. He is the Tiny Tim of the Blue Springs Boy Scouts and goes with them on all their hikes. "Course, sometimes they carry me," he explained gravely; "my legs are so short I can't keep up with them when they go fast; but they always take me with them, and I attend every meeting." His size does not bother Arthur a bit. He is not at all sensitive about it. When a visitor entered the room where he sat in a baby's rocking chair by the fire, intent upon getting every mouthful from a big Jonathan apple, Arthur immediately stood up. "I expect you want me to stand up?" he said sedately, and rose from the little chair. "Most folks want to see how big I am when I stand up, you see." "Well, Arthur," said a friend, "I expect you'd like to have me give you a sack of nice candy, wouldn't you?" "Just use your own judgment about that, sir," said Arthur quickly. "I certainly would appreciate the candy, if you choose to present me with it." Which indicates his care in language and his appreciation of his friends and what they do for him.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

MAKES COUNTERFEIT COINS IN CELL.

Edgar Houldcroft, who was released from the Ipswich Jail (Mass.) after serving a sentence for drunkenness, was arraigned before a Federal commissioner on a charge of passing counterfeit coins, and admitted having made them in his cell. Houldcroft carried a money belt in which were a large number of quarters and nickels. In his pockets were found two moulds which he utilized in his cell at times when he was supposed to be making ornaments.

STOLE TO BE A LAWYER.

Pleading that his reason for stealing a bicycle with two companions was the desire to secure money for another law book, Frank Regine, a bootblack, of Paterson, N. J., had the sympathy of the court. The boy pleaded guilty to the charge.

"What have you to say?" asked Recorder Carroll.

"Please, judge," said Regine, "I only did it to get money for another law book. Gee, it must be nice to be a lawyer and wear nice clothes and do as you please."

Recorder Carroll decided to encourage Regine and permitted all three to go after they promised to pay \$1.50, the amount realized from the sale of the bicycle.

FUSES FOR EXPLOSIVES.

Fuses, such as are used for setting off charges of dynamite in digging subways and tunnels, and for explosive shells in warfare, are prepared very simply in several different ways. One old form was made by soaking a loosely-wound cord for ten minutes in a boiling solution of acetate of lead. Another form is a cotton cord impregnated with chromate of lead.

The fuse invented by Bickford in 1831 consists of a fine thread of black powder inclosed in three envelopes of thread, and soaked in pitch or rubber, according to the use to which it is destined.

One of the most commonly used fuses to-day is made by letting a fine stream of black powder run from the small end of a funnel into an envelope of hemp, thick but not much twisted, the powder falling in as fast as the hemp is twisted. This tube is then inclosed in a mesh of fine cotton, twisted in the direction opposite to that in which the hemp was twisted. The whole is held together with glue or pitch. This is very flexible and burns at the rate of one centimeter a second.

SCHOOL FOR WAR CRIPPLES.

A school in which mutilated soldiers may learn suitable trades and employments is the latest scheme of M. Malvy, the minister of the interior, who recently made the announcement that part of the National Convalescent Institution at St. Maurice on the Marne, founded by Napoleon III. in 1857, will henceforth be devoted to the instruction

of soldiers prevented by the loss of limbs from following their former trades.

The Petit Journal publishes an interview with Dr. Bourrillon, director of the St. Maurice Institution and one of the promoters of the idea, who says:

"We have 900 beds, with 200 more at the Vacassis annex. I purpose to begin immediately the construction of the workshops, etc., required for the instruction, which will be individual and suited to each case of mutilation. I cannot yet say how far the institution will support the totally disabled, but I can assure you that this point has not been ignored in our plans."

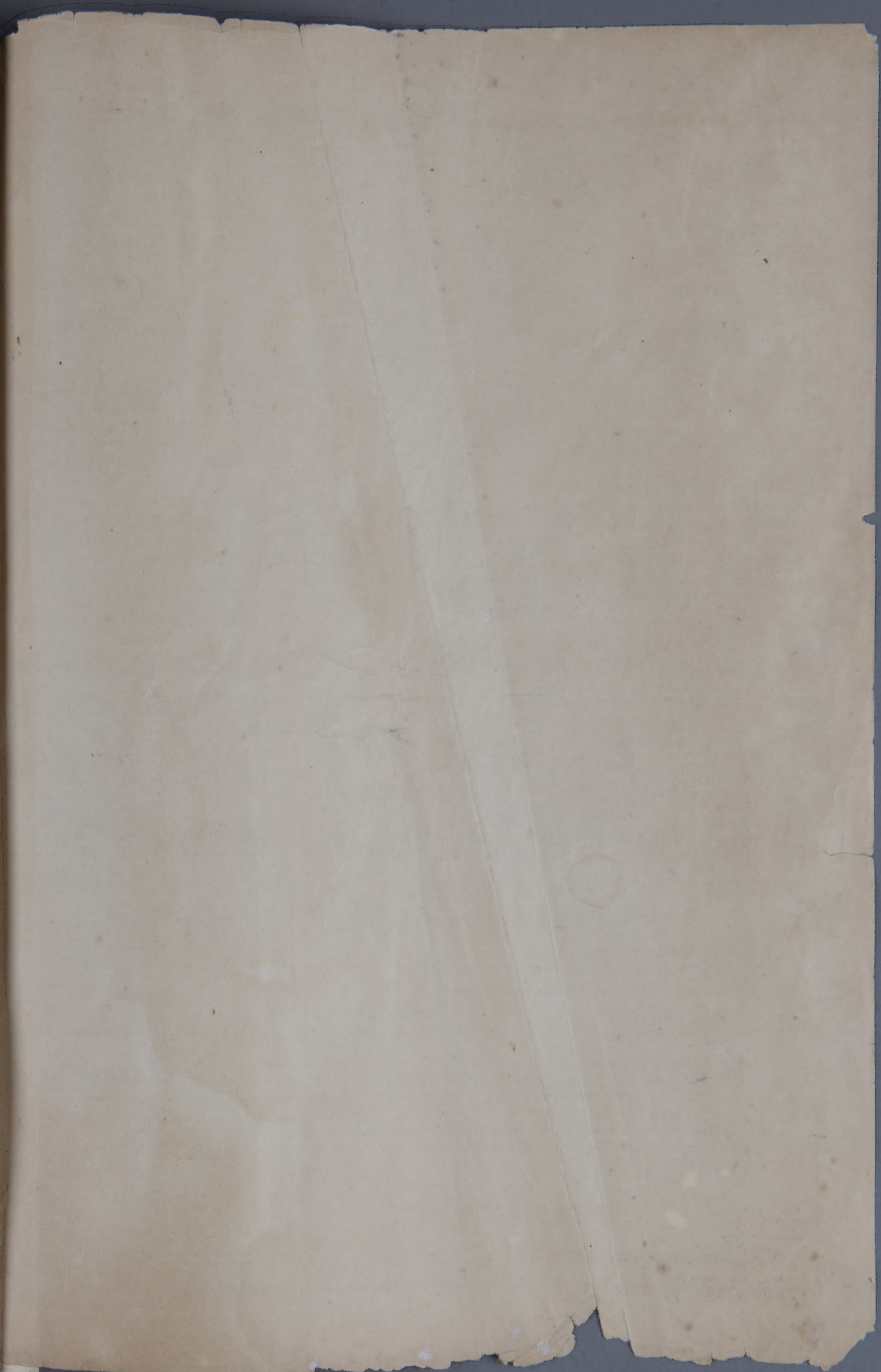
Commenting on Mr. Malvy's announcement The Intransigent calls attention to the cardinal feature of the treatment of the mutilated—that there is in France great scarcity of artificial limbs, most of which have hitherto been imported from Germany. The Intransigent hopes that official efforts to supply the deficiency will take precedence of the less pressing question of instruction for future employment.

TO FORM 24-MILE LAKE.

A dam 50 feet high that will flow the west branch of the Penobscot River back twenty-four miles and merge three lakes in one is to be built this spring by the Great Northern Paper Company at the head of Ripogenus Gorge, a narrow, rocky chasm, through which the river flows, or rather tumbles, for three miles between perpendicular cliffs 100 feet high, with a drop in that distance of more than 200 feet.

Before anything could be done toward the construction of this dam it was necessary to build a highway through the wilderness from the shore of Moosehead Lake at Lily Bay to the gorge of Ripogenus, which begins at the foot of the lake of the same name, as in no other way could the cement and other materials be transported to the site. Two years have been occupied in building this road. The dam will create a lake twenty-four miles long and nine miles wide, swallowing up Ripogenus, Chesuncook and Caribou lakes and flowing out great tracts of timberland.

It is estimated that 40,000 to 60,000 horsepower can be developed at the gorge, but the dam is to be constructed primarily for the purpose of increasing the water storage capacity of the west branch. The company that is to build the new dam already has created storage at Chesuncook Lake by means of a timber dam, estimated at 10,000,000,000 cubic feet, which will be increased by the new dam to 24,000,000,000 feet, while at Twin Lakes, some distance below, there has been created a storage of 15,000,000,000 feet. Together, these storage basins will furnish a uniform flow throughout the year sufficient for the operation of the great pulp and paper mills at Millinocket and East Millinocket, where 1,200 to 1,500 men are employed and two thriving villages have grown up.



FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

—LATEST ISSUES—

- 431 The Young Wrecker; or, The Boy Who Dealt in Derelicts.
- 432 In the Game for Gold; or, Beating the Wall Street Market.
- 433 Messenger Sixty-Four; or, Hustling for a Living.
- 434 Old Kitson's Kid; or, The Best Tip in Wall Street.
- 435 Lineman Jack; or, The Boy Who Built a Business.
- 436 Barry & Co., Bankers and Brokers; or, The Boy Money-Makers in Wall Street.
- 437 On the Fast Mail; or, From Clerk to Postmaster.
- 438 His Last Chance; or, The Boy Who Made Money in Wall Street.
- 439 Shipped to Sea; or, The Treasures of the Coral Cave.
- 440 An Errand Boy's Fortune; or, The Office of Wall Street Secrets.
- 441 In the Film Game; or, The Boy Who Made Moving Pictures.
- 442 A Smart New York Boy; or, From the Tenements to Wall Street.
- 443 Mark Milton's Mine; or, a Schoolboy's Inheritance.
- 444 The Young Banker; or, The Mystery of a Money Box.
- 445 The Secret Chart; or, The Golden Treasure of the Crater.
- 446 The Boy Behind the Deals; or, The Luck of a Wall Street Broker.
- 447 Thrown on the World; or, Starting Business on a Dollar.
- 448 A Speculator at 16; or, The Lad Who Worked His Brains.
- 449 Tom, the Steeple Jack; or, Winning a Living by Nerve.
- 450 Saving a Million; or, Ben and the Wall Street Brokers.
- 451 Down and Out; or, A Hard Boy to Beat.
- 452 The Boy Banker's Double; or, A Strange Wall Street Mystery.
- 453 The Young Beach Comber; or, A Fortune From the Sand.
- 454 The Little Boss; or, After the Wall Street Money Kings.
- 455 \$250,000 in Gold; or, Hunting a Hindoo Treasure.
- 456 A Corner in Money; or, Beating the Wall Street Money Sharks.
- 457 Going it Alone; or, The Boy Who Made His Own Luck.
- 458 Little Dan Tucker; or, Making Big Money in Wall St.
- 459 Fighting for Business; or, Beating a Bad Start.
- 460 A Boy Money Maker; or, In Wall Street on His Nerve.
- 461 Buried Gold; or, The Treasure of the Old Buccaneers.
- 462 Hitting it Rich; or, The Luckiest Firm in Wall St.
- 463 Sam, the Salesman; or, The Boy With the Silver Tongue.
- 464 Playing in Luck; or, A Plotter's Dangerous Deal.
- 465 After a Big Stake; or, Brains Against Brawn.
- 466 Facing the Mexicans; or, The Secret Of the Aztec's Gold.
- 467 Fighting For Fame; or, The Luck Of a Young Contractor.
- 468 Seeking a Lost Treasure; or, The Nerve Of a Young Explorer.
- 469 Matt, the Mechanic; or, The Boy Who Made His Pile.
- 470 Among the Ice Peaks; or, The Voyage That Made the Fortune.
- 471 The Little Castaways; or, The Fortune That a Wreck Made.
- 472 Taking Big Chances; or, The Boy Who Saved a Town.
- 473 Always Lucky; or, Winning on His Merits.
- 474 Out for a Corner; or, A Smart Chicago Boy.
- 475 The Winning Trick; or, How a Boy Made His Mark.
- 476 The Young Editor; or, Running a Country Newspaper.
- 477 A Big Stroke; or, The Lad Who Made a Record.
- 478 In the Copper Field; or, The Mine That Made the Money.
- 479 From a Cent to a Fortune; or, A Chicago Boy's Great Rise.
- 480 A Start in Life; or, A Poor Boy's Rise to Fame.
- 481 A Wide Awake Boy; or, Born With a Winning Streak.
- 482 Capturing the Money; or, How Ben Bailey Made His Millions.
- 483 Digging for Gold; or, The Luck of a Boy Miner.
- 484 A Boy With Grit; or, Earning An Honest Living.
- 485 Andy, the Mill Boy; or, Rising to the Top.
- 486 Fame Before the Footlights; or, The Boy Who Bossed the Stage.
- 487 Lucky Lee, the Office Boy; or, The Nerviest Lad in New York.
- 488 Sure to Get Rich; or, A Smart Young Messenger.
- 489 Pushing it Through; or, The Fate of a Lucky Boy.
- 490 A Born Speculator; or, The Young Sphinx of Wall Street.
- 491 The Way to Success; or, The Boy Who Got There.
- 492 Struck Oil; or, The Boy Who Made a Million.
- 493 A Golden Risk; or, The Young Miners of Della Cruz.
- 494 A Sure Winner; or, The Boy Who Went Out With a Circumlocution.
- 495 Golden Fleece; or, The Boy Brokers of Wall Street.
- 496 A Madcap Scheme; or, The Boy Treasure Hunters of Cocos Island.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 5 cents per copy, in money or postage stamp.
FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS

of our weeklies and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Write or call in your Order and send it to us with the price of the weeklies you want and we will send them to you by return of postage stamps TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.
FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York

OUR TEN-CENT HAND BOOKS

- No. 1. **NAPOLEON'S ORACULUM AND DREAM BOOK.**—Containing the great oracle of human destiny; also the true meaning of almost any kind of dreams, together with charms, ceremonies, and curious games of cards.
- No. 2. **HOW TO DO TRICKS.**—The great book of magic and card tricks, containing full instruction on all the leading card tricks of the day, also the most popular magical illusions as performed by our leading magicians; every boy should obtain a copy of this book.
- No. 3. **HOW TO FLIRT.**—The arts and wiles of flirtation are fully explained by this little book. Besides the various methods of handkerchief, fan, glove, parasol, window and hat flirtation, it contains a full list of the language and sentiment of flowers.
- No. 4. **HOW TO DANCE.**—Is the title of this little book. It contains full instructions in the art of dancing, etiquette in the ballroom and at parties, how to dress, and full directions for calling off in all popular square dances.
- No. 5. **HOW TO MAKE LOVE.**—A complete guide to love, courtship and marriage, giving sensible advice, rules and etiquette to be observed, with many curious and interesting things not generally known.
- No. 6. **HOW TO BECOME AN ATHLETE.**—Giving full instruction for the use of dumbbells, Indian clubs, parallel bars, horizontal bars and various other methods of developing a good, healthy muscle; containing over sixty illustrations.
- No. 7. **HOW TO KEEP BIRDS.**—Handsomely illustrated and containing full instructions for the management and training of the canary, mockingbird, bobolink, blackbird, parakeet, parrot, etc.
- No. 8. **HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST.**—By Harry Kennedy. Every intelligent boy reading this book of instructions can master the art, and create any amount of fun for himself and friends. It is the greatest book ever published.
- No. 9. **HOW TO BOX.**—The art of self-defense made easy. Containing over thirty illustrations of guards, blows, and the different positions of a good boxer. Every boy should obtain one of these useful and instructive books, as it will teach you how to box without an instructor.
- No. 10. **HOW TO WRITE LOVE-LETTERS.**—A most complete little book, containing full directions for writing love-letters, and when to use them, giving specimen letters for young and old.
- No. 11. **HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO LADIES.**—Giving complete instructions for writing letters to ladies on all subjects; also letters of introduction, notes and requests.
- No. 12. **HOW TO DO IT; OR, BOOK OF**

- ETIQUETTE.**—It is a great life secret, and one that every young man desires to know all about. There's happiness in it.
- No. 13. **HOW TO MAKE CANDY.**—A complete hand-book for making all kinds of candy, ice-cream, syrups, essences, etc., etc.
- No. 14. **HOW TO BECOME BEAUTIFUL.**—One of the brightest and most valuable little books ever given to the world. Everybody wishes to know how to become beautiful, both male and female. The secret is simple, and almost costless.
- No. 15. **HOW TO ENTERTAIN AN EVENING PARTY.**—A complete compendium of games, sports, card diversions, comic recitations, etc., suitable for parlor or drawing-room entertainment. It contains more for the money than any book published.
- No. 16. **HOW TO HUNT AND FISH.**—The most complete hunting and fishing guide ever published. It contains full instructions about guns, hunting dogs, traps, trapping and fishing, together with description of game and fish.
- No. 17. **HOW TO DO SECOND SIGHT.**—Heller's second sight explained by his former assistant, Fred Hunt, Jr. Explaining how the secret dialogues were carried on between the magician and the boy on the stage; also giving all the codes and signals.
- No. 18. **HOW TO EXPLAIN DREAMS.**—This little book gives the explanation to all kinds of dreams, together with lucky and unlucky days.
- No. 19. **HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO GENTLEMEN.**—Containing full directions for writing to gentlemen on all subjects.
- No. 20. **HOW TO BECOME A GYMNAST.**—Containing full instructions for all kinds of gymnastic sports and athletic exercises. Embracing thirty-five illustrations. By Professor W. Macdonald.
- No. 21. **HOW TO ROW, SAIL AND BUILD A BOAT.**—Fully illustrated. Full instructions are given in this little book, together with instructions on swimming and riding, companion sports to boating.
- No. 22. **HOW TO RECITE AND BOOK OF RECITATIONS.**—Containing the most popular selections in use, comprising Dutch dialect, French dialect, Yankee and Irish dialect pieces, together with many standard readings.
- No. 23. **HOW TO TELL FORTUNES.**—Everyone is desirous of knowing what his future life will bring forth, whether happiness or misery, wealth or poverty. You can tell by a glance at this little book. Buy one and be convinced.
- No. 24. **HOW TO BECOME AN INVENTOR.**—Every boy should know how inventions originated. This book explains them all, giving examples in electricity, hydraulics, magnetism, optics, pneumatics, mechanics, etc.

- No. 25. **HOW TO COOK.**—One of the most instructive books on cooking ever published. It contains recipes for cooking meat, game, and oysters; also pies, puddings, and all kinds of pastry, and a grand collection of recipes.
- No. 26. **HOW TO BECOME A SPEAKER.**—Containing fourteen illustrations, giving different positions requisite to become a speaker, reader and elocutionist. A containing gems from all the popular authors of prose and poetry.
- No. 27. **HOW TO RIDE A BICYCLE.**—Containing instructions for beginners of a machine, hints on training, etc. A complete book. Full of practical illustrations.
- No. 28. **HOW TO PLAY GAMES.**—A complete and useful little book, containing rules and regulations of billiards, backgammon, croquet, dominoes, etc.
- No. 29. **HOW TO SOLVE CONUNDRUMS.**—Containing all the leading conundrums of the day, amusing riddles, curious cat wits sayings.
- No. 30. **HOW TO BECOME A YOUNG DOCTOR.**—A wonderful book, containing full and practical information in the treatment of ordinary diseases and ailments of every family. Abounding in useful and effective recipes for general complaints.
- No. 31. **HOW TO RAISE DOGS, PIGEONS AND RABBITS.**—A useful and instructive book. Handsomely illustrated.
- No. 32. **HOW TO MAKE AND SET TRAPS.**—Including hints on how to catch weasels, otter, rats, squirrels and birds, and how to cure skins. Copiously illustrated.
- No. 33. **THE BOYS OF NEW YORK MEN'S JOKE BOOK.**—Containing a variety of the latest jokes used by the famous end men. No amateur mixer complete without this wonderful little book.
- No. 34. **THE BOYS OF NEW YORK STUMP SPEAKER.**—Containing a variety of stump speeches, Negro, Dutch, Irish. Also end men's jokes. Just the thing for home amusement and amateur speaking.
- No. 35. **HOW TO BECOME A MAGICIAN.**—Containing the grandest assortment of magical illusions ever placed before the public. Also tricks with cards, incantations, etc.
- No. 36. **HOW TO WRITE IN ALBUMS.**—A grand collection of Album suitable for any time and occasion; including Lines of Love, Affection, Sentiment, Respect, and Condolence; also suitable for Valentines and Wedding Presents.
- No. 37. **THE BOYS OF NEW YORK STREL GUIDE AND JOKE BOOK.**—A thing new and very instructive. Every boy should obtain this book, as it contains instructions for organizing an amateur strel troupe.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 10 cts. per copy, or 3 for 25 cts., in money or postage stamp.
FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York